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PLATO'S AMERICAN
REPUBLIC

FIRST EDITION, JUNE, 1926
REPRINTED, JULY, 1926

PLATO'S AMERICAN REPUBLIC

Done out of the original
by
DOUGLAS WOODRUFF

"fidelia vulnera amanti"

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & Co., Ltd.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
1926

TO
M. C. HOLLIS
 AND
M. J. MACDONALD

*Printed in Great Britain by
 Stephen Austin & Sons, Ltd., Hertford*

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BOOK I

Scene: Athens, 1925

SOCRATES (THE NARRATOR); AGATHON;
LYSIS; PHAELON

We were sitting on the pavement in our usual way, considering all things, and examining into them one at a time. There were with me Lysis and his younger brother Phaelon, two youths whom I loved for their inquiring dispositions and habit of always asking why. As we were sitting there we suddenly saw Agathon approaching, and called to him to join us. When we had made room for him he turned to me and said: 'Listen, Socrates, to a strange thing which happened to me to-day as I was going down to the Piræus. For I now work, as you know, in the Government, and to-day a stranger came up to me outside my office, proposing to buy the Parthenon and all the buildings on the Acropolis and remove them to his own land, and re-erect them there.'

'Truly a strange way of honouring the Athenians,' I said.

'I think,' answered Agathon, 'that it was less his idea to honour the Athenians

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than to make his own countrymen pay him many *denarii* to behold the sight'. 'And did he wish to buy the hill as well as the buildings on it?' 'Why no', answered Agathon, 'for he spoke as one most ignorant, but he guessed that there were as good hills in his own country, which he explained was also the particular residence of the Gods.' 'Without doubt he was an American', I exclaimed.

At this word 'American' the two young men leaned forward eagerly, and Phaelon said:—

'Tell us, Socrates, have you ever lectured in America?'

'How not?' said I.

'And did you like the Americans?' asked Lysis. 'Tell us what manner of people they are. For we have heard many stories of them. For Thrasyarchus tells us that he has nowhere been so well received. And he, you know, has lectured in all the lands he could. But, he says, that where in other countries he received nothing but kindness, in America he received a great many dollars as well. And he says that he is convinced that the Gods have emigrated and made it their country, and that, when it has improved a little more he also will follow the example of the Gods. But Glaucon says just the opposite, maintaining that as the Americans are the farthest away of all

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the barbarians from Athens and civilization, so are they without any doubt the most completely barbarian. Tell us, therefore, what is true about the Americans, for at your lectures you must have seen and questioned them all.'

At this Agathon, who had been trying to repress his laughter since first Lysis had spoken of my lecture-tour, became redder than ever in the face, and finally burst out saying: 'Yes, indeed, Socrates is the best person to give you a faithful picture, if he is sufficiently master of himself and a true lover of wisdom'.

'Go on', I said, 'and make your meaning clearer and cease to bewilder the young'. For I knew what Agathon had in his mind to tell them.

'Why, then, Lysis and Phaelon', said Agathon, 'you must forgive Socrates if he looks like a sheep while I am speaking shamefully of him, as I intend to do. But the truth is that his lectures were much less successful than were those of his wife Xantippe. There were, it is true, many Americans who had heard of Socrates, whose name is painted up on the walls of many of their libraries, and these came to look at him. But he is not a great spectacle to behold, and when he spoke they found he was not interested in any of the things which they desired to know, such as the art of succeeding in the world

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and the other things which the sophists profess to teach. Whereas Xantippe spoke to the women, praising women and declaring them to be the moral leaders of the community, and demanding for them the chief voice in ordering the affairs of the city'.

'Go on to the end, my good Agathon', said I, 'for I know you will not be able to sleep unless you also tell them how I came to see the Middle West'.

'Yes', he said, 'it was in my mind to tell them that also. Xantippe's best lecture, which she gave more than two hundred times, was on the management of the home and the husband, and in this lecture poor Socrates was made to assist. For in no other way could he hope to see the most powerful and strange region of America, which in their dialect they term the Middle West. It was also the only way he could ever pay his passage back to Athens. Many of the women who had read the teachings of a local sage, Emerson, spoke kindly to Socrates and inquired his angle on the beautiful, as though he had been Euclid. But Xantippe showed him to them as an example of the mismanaged home, blaming the spirit of Athens which did not give her authority enough, and warning the women of America to take care lest their men-folk should become too much like Socrates.

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But this danger they did not seem to think imminent'.

'Indeed', said Phaelon, 'you endured much, Socrates'.

'Indeed he did, for Xantippe praised the women of America and the women of America praised Xantippe, and with each exchange of flattery they became more boastful and reckless. At all such gatherings the Americans, especially the women, expect to hear themselves praised. Indeed, that people is like a Persian monarch, for all who approach and speak to them desire gifts from them and endeavour to recommend themselves by flattery. Before half her tour was over Xantippe was openly saying that there were no truer lovers of the good than her audience in the whole world, and that they did quite right to be well satisfied with themselves and to have nothing to do with humility and not to believe it possible they were mistaken in what they thought to be the proper objects of the soul's desire. And in particular she praised them for their refusal to believe there was anything requiring deep thought in philosophy or in public life, saying that people so wise and good did right to trust to their first impressions of everything. Then she told them that the idea that there was anything difficult and mysterious in life was only fit for people

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like Socrates, who were unfit for anything but philosophy. And she explained that the reason that more thinking was done in Europe, and that there was more philosophical discussion there, was that people had so much time on their hands while waiting for their passports to the United States. For these passports, she said, are as long in coming as a conclusion is in the chatterings of Socrates and his friends, and the Europeans spend the time in philosophy hoping to learn resignation and the acceptance of one's destiny. Because more and more often the passport is in the end refused, and nowhere more often than among the Greeks. She is already full with engagements for such addresses for the next two years'.

'Well', I replied, 'I am glad I went there. For as the silent butt of Xantippe's scorn I was free to turn my attention wholly to the strange places we visited. And in particular I satisfied to the full my desire to see and study a Women's Club, than which I had not been able to imagine anything more unnatural'.

'Tell us', said they both, 'about a Woman's Club'.

'If I did', said I with a smile, 'I do not think you would believe me. But you would say that in America I had indulged myself too freely in potent distillations of

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the tail of the cock, and spoke the thing which was not '.

' Oh no, Socrates ', exclaimed Phaelon, ' for I have often heard the Americans spoken of before, and I know about the women who rule the men in the valley of the great river. The river is the Amazon, the greatest of all American rivers, and the inhabitants are called Amazons. Do I not understand rightly ? '

' Not quite rightly ', put in Agathon, ' for the Amazon River is in another America altogether, and the chief rivers where Socrates was are the Mississippi and the Missouri, named, I believe, after the two first women who tamed their menfolk, the one her husband, the other her father '.

' You should also tell them, Agathon, should you not, that the method of domination is different, and that, whereas the Amazons triumphed by skill in arms and valour, the American women triumph by something more lasting and stronger than physical force. They have managed to make the men believe that they are superior and ought to be obeyed '.

' How so ? ' said Lysis. ' Is it in fact true that they are superior ? '

' My answer will surprise you perhaps ', I replied, ' but I will answer boldly and say, Yes, if it is a better thing to be alive than dead, which, as I have said elsewhere,

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is not a thing we can decide. But it is certain that in America the women are more alive than the men. For the men work so hard that they kill themselves, and are so busy while living that they have no time for the proper business of life'.

'They must work, must they not', said Lysis, 'in order to obtain the leisure for philosophy and public life, for I have heard that they have no slaves, and no class beneath the men, and if they did not work they would starve'.

'Listen', I said, 'and learn how little you yet understand about the character of this extraordinary people, the most extraordinary, as I believe, that has yet appeared upon the face of the earth. For if you see men engaging of their own will in the most heavy and degrading employments of commerce, long after they have accumulated for themselves and their families not a sufficiency only but an extreme abundance both of those things that may be called necessities and those that are plainly luxuries, can anything be said of such men except that they are either ignoble in their own souls and ignorant of the true nature of what is good, or else that they are acting in obedience to the orders of some tyrant, and are, in fact, not freemen at all, but slaves?'

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‘ Assuredly ’, they said, ‘ they must be one or the other ’.

‘ Or both ’, said Agathon.

‘ Yes ’, I agreed, ‘ that was well added by Agathon, for we must not forget the influence of religion which even tyrants can modify only through slow degrees. But as religion is the manifestation of the soul’s nature, if we find the religion of these people compelling them to lead the life they do, shall we not justly decide that there is in their souls an ignorance of what is truly good ? Now I say that in religion they are followers of Pythagoras without rightly understanding his doctrine, and that they are to be numbered among the worshippers of the Sacred Number ’.

‘ Without doubt ’, said Lysis, ‘ the Sacred Number is Number One, which has long been the favourite among mankind ’.

‘ You are wrong ’, said I, ‘ and you must not think that the Americans are in general more selfish than other men. I think that the opposite is the case, and that nowhere on earth, not even among the Athenians, is there so much fellow-feeling and willingness to help combined with so much competitiveness and so great a desire to excel in contests. No, the number is the symbol ∞ , or whatever you choose that denotes the greatest quantity. For they pay a most special and devout worship to a strange god whom they call Progress,

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and whose will they declare it to be that there shall be made as great a number as possible of all objects that men make, but principally of the machines that are called "autos" or "cars", which move men quickly from place to place'.

'It is often a fine thing to go quickly from place to place', said Lysis.

'Why, yes', I said, 'and in addition the control of these machines gives great joy to the Americans. So that it may well happen that they will live altogether in their cars. For at present they must endeavour to find some place in the city where they can leave their car while they go to an office, and he who is successful in doing this is said to have parked his car, and is held in honour. And as among many peoples a youth is not granted the dignity of manhood until he has slain an enemy, so among the Americans must he first prove himself by parking a car'.

'They would become men sooner if theirs was the old test of slaying a man, would they not?' said Lysis, 'for that requires but little skill in controlling cars and a stout heart is alone sufficient'.

'Why, yes', I said, 'and it is my belief that the present state of affairs cannot endure and that to park will soon be beyond the wit of any save a true philosopher, who will guard his place by his presence upon it night and day. So

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did Diogenes preserve his claim to the spot where he parked his tub. For the truth can be considered in any place, as I observed to the traffic-policemen in New York, who objected to my examination of Glaucon in Broadway. But for the ordinary Americans, I think, there is no solution except the abolition of offices and the transaction of all business in cars. They will equip their cars as offices and drive from their homes to the market-place. These car-offices will enjoy all the space that is at present filled with buildings. When their cars are so fitted as to take all the papers of their business, they can work freely on the journeys out and home, dictating to their clerks as they go. Nor will it much surprise me if the private home is abolished to give place to the residential car so that the American soul may find a final happiness, and men may be born in cars and live and wed and die in them, and be cremated in the engine, without ever having to put a foot on the ground. And so will arise a new race to take the place of the centaurs of old. For, as the centaurs were half men and half horses, so will these be half men and half motor-cars. And it would seem that of such a race the natural sustenance would be alcohol. So, at least, the future appears to me, or do you not think so, Agathon ? ’

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‘ No ’, he said.

‘ Well ’, I replied, ‘ you may be right. It may happen that everybody will be run over in the next few years, which will disprove all our prophecies and speculations ’.

‘ Yes ’, he said, ‘ that is much more likely ’.

‘ But I think ’, I continued, ‘ that we will say that whether or not the Americans remain in their cars, we for our part will have nothing to do with them, but rather regard them as a vexatious interruption of right living, and in particular as a great distraction in the search for truth. And we will refuse to sit ourselves down as the Americans love to do and start the machinery and follow whithersoever the car leads. For do you notice how we have wandered out of our course, as generally happens with these machines, and have quite forgotten the original thread of our discourse and the question why the Americans worship this strange god Progress, making an incantation of the name and chanting it as if it were an explanation of the way they spend their lives ? ’

‘ Well, Socrates ’, said Agathon, ‘ most gods are strange, and if they were not strange we should be doubtful if they were gods ’.

‘ True ’, I said, ‘ but there is a strange-

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ness which helps the divine part of the soul and a strangeness which oppresses it. If we consider the past fortunes of America we shall see how the worship of theirs grew up. And, to begin with, are not the Americans right when they say that theirs is a great country ? ’

‘ Yes ’, said Agathon, ‘ it is certainly vast ’.

‘ And rich in the wealth of its agriculture and minerals and so offering a fair field for endeavour and great rewards for enterprise and skill ? ’

‘ Assuredly ’, he said.

‘ Then we must remember that the Americans are for the most part the descendants of those who left Europe as poor men. And this is true whether we are considering those original Americans of three hundred years ago, or those who went there within the last century, after the others had freed themselves from the tyrant George ’.

‘ Was this George a heavy tyrant ? ’ asked Lysis, ‘ for tyrant is a harsh name, and I have read that the English themselves were always well pleased with him ’.

‘ I must confess ’, I said, ‘ that he does not appeal much to me. Few men have less resembled the philosopher King. It is plain that reason was weak in his soul, and that he was narrow and obstinate and full of craftiness, and that the English

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only loved him as a check upon their lesser overlords and as the chief of their nation in their wars with the French, which continued all his reign. And though he did not actually oppress the Americans it was not of advantage to them to be his subjects, nor a thing to which they had of necessity to submit'.

Here Lysis looked up, and said: 'Tell me, Socrates, do you think they regret it now, and that they will soon return to their allegiance to King George's house, for an English lady told me that it would happen very quickly, the revolt having ended in the muddle America is in now'.

'That word "muddle" is a favourite with the English', said Agathon.

'And rightly', said I, 'since our words are to designate the things among which we live. I know it is a common view among the English that the Americans will abandon this attempt of theirs to found a new country, and that after this present President Coolidge they will not elect another, but will all pack up and return to the countries from which they originally came, regretting the increasingly disastrous experiment and going back meekly to their respective kings and rulers, and leaving America to the Red Indians and the Buffalos, whose political life runs more easily. But, for my part, I

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reject this opinion, and believe that the Americans will persevere'.

'I think so, too', said Agathon.

'And so it is important to consider this religious view of theirs about Progress. I said that most of the Americans went there in the last hundred years and found abundant rewards for work. The great need of everybody was that the total wealth should be increased and the country rendered fruitful, or in their phrase "opened up". This real occupation of America was the great and absorbing business of the Americans, who were not troubled with strong foreign enemies. Their ablest citizens devoted themselves to the pursuit of wealth, and received the public admiration because in general, at that time, the man who enriched himself enriched also everyone else. We must remember that the Americans came from countries where there was a ruling caste to which they did not belong, and from the first they so framed the constitution that it should be clear that the ministers were the servants of the people. While the independence was new and precarious, interest and prestige still followed those who transacted the business of the people, but when the novelty had vanished the attention of everybody was turned to developing the estate they had won. No one was willing to be a minister without

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the wealth and dignity of European rulers, and political life attracted not the best but the less successful and able of the community, and ceased to fire the ambition of the young. For the life of the country was altogether in its economic development and not in its political affairs'.

Then Agathon said : ' And should you not also say that political life was made harder in America than elsewhere ? '

' Assuredly, we should ', I answered, ' for the truth is that this same worship of size and numbers that we spoke of before has nowhere hurt the Americans more than in the ordering of their political life. Do you remember, Lysis, hearing of a discussion over the ideal State and how many men it was settled should form the State, and what was the number beyond which it was unsafe for a State to grow ? '

' Five thousand and forty ', he said, ' is the figure Plato gives '.

' And will it surprise you to learn that the Americans considerably exceed that figure ? '

' I had suspected as much ', he replied, ' from the crowds of them that visit Athens, for they must leave some of their number behind to hold the country, and there must be very many thousands of them to provide all those audiences for Xantippe. And, after all, nobody ever

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quite does what Plato says, not even when he makes you, Socrates, the mouthpiece of his views. I will guess two hundred thousand'.

'And what will you say when I tell you that you are yet short of the real number, and that, not to make a long story, the Americans are far more plentiful than the subjects of the Great King himself? There are more than one hundred million Americans'.

After a long pause, Phaelon said rather faintly: 'Why, Socrates?'

'That', I answered, 'is known only to the Gods, whose ways are not the ways of mortals, but certainly they have made this enormous number of Americans and have not stopped yet'.

'No wonder so many of them come to Europe', said Lysis.

'But listen', I said, 'for the most extraordinary thing is yet to come. What will you think of such people when I tell you that they endeavour to live all under one government and to share one Assembly?'

'Socrates', said Lysis, sitting up and looking me straight in the face, 'I do not believe you'.

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I then explained to them as well as I could about the forty-eight States that make up the United States, making it plain that each State had its own government, but that there was also the Federal Government, which had authority everywhere. And this they understood readily enough, for the notion of a federation of communities was familiar to them. I told them briefly of how originally there were North and South, and of the Civil War, which was fought to establish the ascendancy of the Federal Government, and I made it plain that that ascendancy had grown greater to this day and that the State Governments had become more and more unimportant. And I did not hide from them that the choosing of parties and policies for the central assembly became less and less a thing over which ordinary citizens had any control at all, and that nowhere else in the world did the members so chosen receive less respect or less truly represent the people electing them. 'Yet', I said, 'the Americans are extremely attached to their Central Government, far more than they are to the governments of their own States'.

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Lysis pondered for some moments on these things, and then said: 'Was this a great civil war?'

'Well', said Agathon, 'we Greeks have a high standard for such wars, when Greek meets Greek. But for barbarians it was a stern struggle'.

'And terrible in its results', I said, 'as you will agree if you are of my opinion that that Civil War was the most disastrous thing in the history of the Americans, if it fastened on their necks so great a mockery of popular government as is their central government'.

'Assuredly they would not have fought for it if they had foreknown the future', he said.

'On the contrary', I said, 'most of them consider that it was the turning point in their history, and they have made their chief hero of the statesman who saved the Union'.

'Why?' asked Phaelon.

'Because being one has made them big and strong, or rather big and rich. Because the central government made commerce easier between men in different States, and thus assisted the great development of the country which has marked the years since the Civil War. In particular the victory secured the market of the defeated States for the manufacturers of the North. It is necessary to remember

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these things, for in America it is the manufacturers and their wives who decide what other people shall think, for among their other products they manufacture public opinion'.

'Come, Socrates', said Agathon, 'you forget your old friends the preachers'.

'Well', I replied, 'I find the preachers have great influence. Yet they only succeed in those matters where the manufacturers support them, though the union of the two is irresistible'.

'What would happen', asked Lysis, 'if the preachers wished one thing and the manufacturers another?'

'That seldom happens', I said. 'For the majority of preachers have never been known to wage a campaign against any activities that are thought desirable by the men of commerce, such as the prostitution of the soul which is called salesmanship, or the concentration upon business success which is called "making good". But they attack those pleasures of ordinary men, like gambling and drinking, which the manufacturers will support them in attacking. For I verily believe they think it worse to be a drunkard than to sell one's soul for gold. Nor is it difficult to understand how they have reached even such absurdities as this'.

'We are listening', they said.

'Why, they hold that some sins might

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unfit a man to serve the Gods, and in particular the God Progress, for they do not value all the gods equally, and to Bacchus they will not agree to pay any honours at all. Now, to those who think like that, a man will seem not wholly bad though the reasonable part of his soul be subordinated to a shameless desire for pelf, because such a man can play his part, and, indeed, be a leader, in that industrial life, walking calmly among the whirring wheels and running the machines whose buzz they consider a perpetual song of praise to Progress. But a drunkard cannot safely assist at these services'.

'He might', said Agathon, 'if he would not mind being caught up in the wheels and immolated as a sacrifice, but I can well believe he sees enough things going round as it is without going into factories to see more'.

'So the manufacturers', I resumed, 'were strongly in favour of this Civil War, and the preachers were with them. And these two parties make up the minds of millions of people'.

'It must be fine fun, Socrates', said Lysis, 'to make up so many minds like that'.

'Indeed they find it so, yet they must do it with care, for in many matters they do not have the power of making the Americans think absolutely anything they

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please, but only the power of making one out of several opinions prevail. For they see the American soul like a ship with full-bellied sails, going to one of several harbours, according as the winds and currents drive it, and these manufacturers and these preachers can decide on the harbour and drive that ship before their mighty blasts and blowings, scattering away all contrary winds'.

At this Lysis looked very thoughtful, and then said slowly: 'If they have indeed so much power it must be that there is some correspondence in the American soul, and that the manufacturers and the preachers are strong in the national life because the manufacturing part of the soul and the preaching part of the soul is strong inside the ordinary American. For so you have explained to me that the constitution of a State is reflected in the constitution of the souls of its citizens'.

'My excellent Lysis', I said, 'you have well stated a difficult truth, and much of the power of these people comes from the fact that an American thinks he ought to listen to a manufacturer because he himself, in his own soul, thinks highly of manufacturing, and will not listen to a philosopher, thinking meanly of philosophy. So also he admires a preacher, though such are seldom humble and many,

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indeed, go about bursting with presumption and acting as though they were wiser and better than all other men. But there is a further explanation of their power. These manufacturers and preachers are organized and have the use of money, so that they can pay men to write and repeat the same things over and over again, till the Americans, from seeing and hearing them so often, assume that they are true'.

Then Lysis said: 'Has the strengthening of this power, Socrates, been the worst of the evils that resulted from the Civil War?'

'Many and heavy have been the ills', said I, 'resulting from that contest and the views dictated by the North'.

'There are those', Agathon said, 'who say that all that has happened would have happened without the Civil War'.

'Yes', I said, 'but we cannot pretend to know that. And so I am content to look at what has taken place and to trace how events have helped each other without following such writers into the marshes and bogs of hypothetical imaginings. Now it seems to me that the Civil War gave the death stroke to their political life, for it made the central government supreme over the states at the same time as it made the interests of commerce predominant over the central government'.

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‘ Explain to us, Socrates ’, they said, as I was expecting they would.

‘ Why ’, I said, ‘ you can easily understand that the war strengthened the central government, giving it new duties and new powers, and fixing all men’s eyes upon it, and accustoming them to think its needs and acts of greater importance than the concerns of their own localities ’.

‘ Yes ’, they said.

‘ And if that very war is in support of the government’s claim to authority and is waged successfully, must not the prestige of that government be established, and that of the smaller governments diminished ? ’

‘ It must ’, they assented.

‘ Now, do you think ’, I asked, ‘ that an ordinary man will be able to understand or even to follow questions of policy, especially when he is far away from the place of government and is absorbed in the pursuit of his private gain ? ’

‘ Assuredly not ’.

‘ And that in proportion as America has increased in size and wealth each citizen has less and less felt able to take part in the government, or even to weigh and judge of the opinions of the other citizens when there are so many of them. For most citizens know only a small part of their enormous country. And so most of them do not follow the questions of the public

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interest and act a part in political life, which has become in their country a trade like any other. And as all traders must keep the goodwill of the public, so especially must those who provide administration. But the need for goodwill is not a great check in any trade where competition is weak, and two concerns have a monopoly and can sell what article they like and call it administration. Furthermore, this war left strong feelings so that men stood firmly by their parties, and it kept floating in the air many fine names like "American" and "Republican", and "Union", in which the men of commerce who desired to run the government could dress themselves up. For it is difficult for such men themselves to invent names which arouse emotion, and yet they do not dare to call things by their true names and show themselves as they are. But the memories of the war made a grand cloak for their business purposes'.

'Yes', said Lysis, 'I am beginnng to see how their power was riveted on the necks of the Americans, when they had all those powerful words at their disposal'.

'At the very time', I said, 'that they were making those railways of theirs and were determined to control the public treasury. And, moreover, does it not follow that power will belong to whoever

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can persuade the Americans that popular opinion is with him and that, the larger the number and the area, the greater the power of those who are rich and can pay for propaganda?'

'What exactly is propaganda?' said Lysis.

'It is, with advertising, the chief curse of the Americans, and may, indeed, be described as political advertising. For never in the history of the world has there been so wonderful a field for the skilful persuader as are these modern democracies, where all the people can read and very few of them can think. All are secretly uncertain of themselves, and in America more so than elsewhere, and look to see what their neighbours are thinking and desire to be counted among the majority. For nothing is stronger in America than this desire to belong to the majority and to say "We think" or "We feel". And it is natural for business men to be timid, for their business depends upon the good opinion of others, and so it is that business men very easily become hypocrites. I believe myself the American men do not mind dying since it means joining the great majority'.

'And one ever growing greater', added Agathon.

'Yes', I said, 'but they will not enjoy Hades, where time is not money any more,

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and no one but Charon has any wealth, so that the most forward salesmanship will be in vain'.

'Poor Americans', said Lysis, 'they will feel very lost'.

'They will understand giving a sop to Cerberus', said Agathon; 'it will be like their own politics. And they will like the crowds'.

'Come, my good friends', I said, 'cease to tarry with the Americans in Hades, and let me resume my tale of their earthly misfortunes'.

'Pray do so, Socrates', they said.

'Then I will say', I resumed, 'that the second great disaster of that war has been this: that by the mechanism of the Constitution (to use a phrase often in their mouths, by which they mean that the laws made for other times and conditions produce different and strange results to-day), the opinions and ideas of one part of the country become the laws that are to be obeyed by all the parts. For it is the people of the North spreading westward to the great rivers that have built up in the great agricultural plains the growing empire of the Middle West, of which we spoke earlier, where the preachers and manufacturers have most power of all, having secured the ear of the women. Except for an accident once or twice the same party has been in power

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ever since the war, and that is the party of the North and the manufacturers, and the South have hardly more voice in the central government than if they were frankly governed as subjects'.

'What sort of people were these in the South?' asked Lysis.

'The best of them were the very best sort of barbarians', I replied, 'and the nearest to civilization of all the Americans'.

'But they are from Ethiopia, are they not?' said Lysis, 'for I have heard men whistling in the streets of Athens songs in which the singer praises the blackness of his lover's or mother's face and these songs are what men sing in these Southern States'.

'Why', I said, 'can you not guess the explanation, for indeed it is not difficult? These Southerners had black slaves. Indeed, the war was largely caused by that'.

'How', said Lysis.

'Why, among barbarians it is not natural that one man should serve another, for all are slaves by nature. And, in general, all are slaves to one despot, as among the Persians. Now in America the northern barbarians were angry that the Southerners were served by Ethiopians, whom they declared to be in all respects the equals of the whites. And when they won the doubtful struggle, they wrote

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in their Constitution that that was so. For they believe they can change the nature of things by changing that Constitution of theirs. But, indeed, they have made much less difference than they think, and freed individuals rather than the race itself, and the chief part of the Ethiopians, and, as I believe, the happiest, are those serving in the fields and households of the South. For, if you do not pursue the life of reason as only the few can do, it is better to serve a man pursuing, even faintly, that life than to pass your days in the fever of petty trading. But these Northerners came from aristocratic countries where they had suffered the insolence of aristocrats, and did not understand rightly about personal dignity. For they are filled with pride against personal service, being full of self assertion towards individuals and of slavishness towards public opinion. Whereas, rightly, a man should not think himself lowered by any useful service to a good man, supposing he should meet with one, but should feel it extreme degradation to hand over his soul to the keeping of the crowd. Or does it not seem so to you ?

‘Why, yes, Socrates’, answered Agathon ; ‘I can see these Northerners were the most unsuitable people possible to have a voice in the ordering of the South’.

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'However', I said, 'it has happened now, and the Southerners were all rendered poor by the exhaustion of the struggle, so that sheer necessity has changed the character of southern life. But they still continue to show great understanding, for people who are not Greeks. They measure things by other standards than quantity, and they do not think meanly of leisure. But their glories they have left upon the field of battle'.

'Yes', said Agathon, 'and though they were able to prevent the North from dictating to them how they should live, they have been unable to do the great work they were needed to do. For nothing else could check the Middle West when that grew strong'.

'I agree with you, Agathon', I said, 'and now the standards of the manufacturers spread steadily through the whole country. That was the third disaster, and there still remains a fourth'.

'Tell us, then', said Lysis, 'about the fourth disaster which, as it seems, this unfortunate Civil War has caused'.

'Why', I said, 'did we not say that it had fixed the attention of everybody upon the central or federal government?'

'We did'.

'And made them cease to think of themselves as members of this state or that, but rather as Americans'.

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‘ Assuredly ’.

‘ But if the North had failed to impose unity, not the Southern States only but in all probability the Northern ones also would have been virtually independent of each other, and only joined to one another in some kind of League such as we Greeks are used to. North America would have resembled South America, but I think there would have been even more complete peace among the North American States than among those of South America ’.

‘ Certainly ’, Agathon said, ‘ they live with the Canadians in great and striking amity. But they do not believe their condition would have been one to envy ’.

‘ No ’, I said, ‘ probably all sorts of other misfortunes would have visited them. But they cannot really expect anything else, it being the nature of barbarians to incur disasters. We, however, are considering their actual ills to-day. Can they deny that they would have been saved from that glorification of strength which is a fatal temptation to great and powerful peoples, and never more than when they are unchecked by the presence of strong neighbours ? ’

‘ They cannot deny it, Socrates ’, said Agathon.

‘ As it is, must we not say the size of their political unit has done great harm

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to the American soul? For every number that is sufficiently large is to them a magical number, and the Americans come easily to believe that everything they think or do must be right because there are so many of them thinking or doing it. And most of all do they tend to think that they cannot have anything to learn from foreign nations because America is bigger'.

'Are there really far more Americans than other people?' asked Phaelon.

'No', I said, 'there are, in fact, far more Chinamen than there are Americans—but they say that there is another test of superiority besides size'.

'And what is that?' asked Phaelon.

'Speed'.

'How?'

'The speed', I explained, 'with which the size is attained. And they say they are greatly superior to the Chinese in speed of development, and this claim I believe to be true'.

Lysis nodded his head slowly from side to side and said: 'Indeed, Socrates, the ills affecting the Americans seem to be many and heavy'.

'But worse', I said, 'is to come, unless they will change altogether and abandon their pride and listen meekly to the philosophers'.

'How, Socrates?'

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‘Why’, I said, ‘they are doomed to frustration, for the opportunities of wealth are not infinite. And at first it was reasonable to encourage men of business that the resources of the land might be organized, but when that has been done there begins a struggle among the people for the largest share of the resources. And, in the end, that phase also passes and the game is played out and the different resources are controlled by different groups of men. No newcomers can fight against them, and the young men must be content to serve these groups, finding their reward in promotion and pay as though they were soldiers, as in a manner they are. And these promotions also grow rigid and mechanical in time. And great wealth is then only to be won in some strange and lucky way, and the battle for the market grows keener, and the cleverest men devote themselves to what they call progressive advertising, and the “Problem of Salesmanship”’.

‘What is progressive advertising?’ asked Lysis.

‘It is arousing the widest possible sense of want’.

‘What is the Problem of Salesmanship?’ asked Phaelon.

‘It is how best to mislead people about their own desires; persuading them to give their time and strength and money

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to obtain something they do not at all need, thus making them the instruments of your private gain'.

Phaelon at once demanded: 'And do they kill the salesman who does this?'

'By the pillars of Hercules, no! they use the gold of the public treasury to teach it in their schools, for they think that all men should learn to prey upon one another in this way, deceiving and doing harm to one another with their tongues'.

'It seems to me, Socrates', said Lysis, 'that these people spend their energies in many strange and doubtful ways'.

'They do, indeed', I assented.

'And they have so much energy', said Agathon.

'It is stupendous', I said. 'When I went to Niagara Falls an American said it made him sad that so much power was going to waste that might be made productive. And I replied that I felt in that manner about the vast energies of the people, for if they could be harnessed to the problems of philosophy much knowledge might result. For if we could have the energy pure without any of the American nature fixing its character, armed with so powerful a tool we could clear up many doubtful speculations. But he seemed to think I wanted everybody to busy themselves with serious

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questions, though the thoughts of such people would, of course, be useless, and he recommended me to take my proposition to an editor of a magazine, for he said that he "had a hunch philosophy might catch on, seeing the success of those other word-puzzle crazes"'.

'It was lucky for him, Socrates', exclaimed Lysis 'that you are so patient with fools. Did you reason with him?'

'I attempted it', I replied. 'But he said he had no time to reason and that if he once began he would never "make good"'. And in that, at least, I agreed with him'.

'And you were not angry with him at all, O excellent Socrates', exclaimed Lysis.

'Pity', I answered, 'and not anger, was what I felt, for I knew that he had not a free mind of his own, but was, like most things in that country, the result of what they proudly call "mass production manufacture"'.

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‘ Then tell me, Socrates, do you consider the Americans to be free ? ’

‘ Why, no ’, I said, ‘ they are the least free of all the peoples of the earth. For they live under a tyrant, and one not a whit more merciful than was Procrustes. For Procrustes forced all over whom he could obtain power to become standardized, fitting them to that bed of his and lopping off the feet of those that were too long, but racking and stretching the limbs of those that were too short, so that the bodies of all should conform to the same mould. But the tyrant who rules the Americans—or all whom he can master—is worse than Procrustes, for he seeks to fashion and control not the body, as is the way of ordinary tyrants, but the soul itself. He standardizes their souls wherever he is strong ’.

‘ Truly a terrible tyrant ’, said Lysis ; ‘ who and what is he ? ’

‘ His title ’, I said, ‘ is Public Opinion, or the Opinion of the Majority, and he is the offspring of Propaganda ’.

‘ And why ’, said Lysis, ‘ do you call that opinion by so harsh a name ? For it seems to me that it is more sensible

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to be ruled by the opinion of the majority than by the whim of a single tyrant like most barbarians, or the opinion of the minority like the English'.

'Come', I replied, 'and let us examine this question together. For does it not seem to you probable that men can be ruled by opinion in many ways and that some ways may well be good but others bad?'

'Yes', he said.

'And that there will be a great difference between opinions, since some will really belong to the people who hold them and be indeed a part of themselves, while others will be forced upon them from outside and will be repeated and acted upon through fear, and so far from being an expression of the soul of him who utters them, they will act as a great blanket stifling the breath of the soul and killing it and making the man an automaton and a slave and not a reasonable being at all'.

'Certainly', said Lysis.

'Well', I said, 'we will leave for the present the discussion of the English soul, being careful to return to it later, and that for several reasons. For in the first place it is so odd and extraordinary that it arouses our sense of wonder and we contemplate it without effort, and secondly because it is always necessary to consider

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the English when we consider the Americans, so great is the effect of the two races upon each other. But now we will look as closely as we can into the nature of this tyrant, who, as I verily believe, is the chief evil from which the Americans suffer. And I think I shall lead you to agree with me when we have seen how their past history has made them into a prey for such a monster'.

'Explain it in your own way', said Agathon, 'so that eventually you come to the point'.

'Why', I said, 'I wish to approach this matter delicately, treading carefully like a scout at night and not rushing forward with great shouts, for I do not know how my words may be repeated and printed out wrongly in the news-sheets of the Americans. For the Americans have long ears, and hear everything that is said of them. They are sensitive people and restive when criticized, and if I speak bluntly, as I generally do, there will be many who will refuse hereafter to pay attention not to me only, but to Plato and to all the Greeks. And yet it is among the Greeks that they will find those who can teach them most and give them the greatest benefits, explaining to them the principles of right living and, in particular, the necessity for examining our notions and

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for being cautious about declaring that we know things, and, above all, for being tolerant of disagreement and discussion'.

'The men of Athens', said Agathon slyly, 'have not always shown you a proper tolerance, Socrates, and they are your own countrymen. How, then, can you be surprised that the Business Men's Luncheon Club of Hootsville, Iowa, was unwilling to hear your doubts, for I know that that experience is what is in your mind'.

'A singular power indeed', I exclaimed, 'has been given to you, dear Agathon, of reading the minds of your friends. But I assure you that there is in my mind at present no such personal recollection. I have only the power to think of one thing at a time and I am now thinking that we shall certainly never finish our inquiry if you keep laughing to yourself in this way in order to make Lysis curious over the incidents of my lecturing tour'.

Here Lysis intervened in a charming manner, and said to me: 'Let him tell us the story, Socrates, for I can see he is dying to do so, and I will confess that I want to hear it. And when he has told it he shall keep quiet, and you shall unfold to us the nature of this Public Opinion. And if he thinks he can make me doubt the wisdom of your talk I will tell him at once that he is mistaken, and that we are

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only listening to him as to a sort of clown'.

'So they spoke of Socrates in Hootsville', said Agathon, who then pulled from his robe what I saw were news cuttings. I remembered the great collection of such cuttings that Xantippe had made, and sent back with some little malice for the Athenians to read, especially of cuttings referring in an outspoken manner to myself.

When he had refreshed his memory with these, he turned to Lysis and said :—

'You must understand, Lysis, that our friend here has a different view of time from that held by the Americans. For he lives in a leisurely way and is never hurried even in the pursuit of wisdom. But the Americans are hurried in everything they do. They are hurried into the world and they are hurried out again, and all the time it is a rush, all crying "Step along there, please!" and the young applying to the old their proverb, "Pass right along down the car". No one here has ever told Socrates to step along. Now in nothing are they more hurried than in the pursuit of wisdom and truth. Most of them do not join in the pursuit at all, saying they have no time to spare from the pursuit of wealth, but some will give twenty minutes in the week at a luncheon.

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And it was at one of these luncheons that Socrates spoke '.

' Is it possible both to eat and to talk in twenty minutes ? ' asked Lysis.

' The luncheon lasts a full hour ', replied Agathon, ' but you must understand that men so busy have much to do in that hour. In the first place they must all keep friends and indulge in friendly feelings for which there is no time in the rest of the day. And so they wear the names by which their close friends call them on a piece of paper on their garments, so that each friend may remember the special name of the other. The branch of commerce to which each one is devoted is also printed on the piece of paper or card, for the Americans understand that friendship consists in the exchange of services. And for this reason they are careful to have only one of each calling in these clubs. But it is furthermore necessary to feel cheerful and light-hearted and to produce that in the hour is not easy. Least of all to men who have been deluded into denying themselves those fermented beverages which alone can banish the anxieties of commerce. So these men sing songs as they eat, rising between the mouthfuls to sing praises of their club or their town, or sometimes to sing tenderly of their mothers, of whom the food before them has caused them to think with longing.

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Furthermore, there are announcements to be made and visitors and their callings to be proclaimed. For the Americans never forget their proverb that friendship leads to business. So you will understand Socrates hardly had time to make his points, and, whether or not it was that no one understood him because to save time they had made him begin while the sweet was being served with much clatter, yet it must be admitted that the paper reported it as "confessedly a disappointment after last week's slap-up talk on personal contacts in business".

'Poor Socrates!' said Lysis; 'did no one call yours a slap-up talk?'

'I am afraid not', I said, 'but then I said things they were not very eager to hear, and even before I spoke there had been much question whether I should be asked'.

'Yes', said Agathon, 'many doubted the propriety of asking him, after a local minister had declared that our friend was not only a sort of dago but that he was the lowest of crawling creatures, a man who had knocked his own home town, meaning that he had criticized many of the actions of the Athenians. But another minister said that he had something in him and was a prominent citizen back in Athens, and had secured a wide publicity for his slogan "Boost Knowledge",

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though he was mistaken in thinking that Socrates had used that actual expression'.

'But what was the address about?' Lysis demanded.

I answered him: 'It was about the place of liberty in the life of the State, which they did not seem to me to understand'.

'Indeed', said Agathon, 'they soon grow restive if you speak of liberty'.

'Indeed yes', I assented. 'And yet two minutes before they had been singing some praises to a sweet land of liberty which was also, as I understood the words, the home of the brave and free. But when the Americans rejoice that they are free they mean free from King George III. For they are slow in some matters'.

'It is like you Socrates', said Lysis, 'to seize hold boldly of this question of liberty and not to let go but to force them to examine it'.

'My heart had been touched', I replied, 'by a spectacle which I saw when first our boat anchored in New York Harbour. There is an island there called Ellis Island, the abode of the rejected of America, where I also spent two days. Many emigrants think that they are emigrating to the United States when in fact they are emigrating to Ellis Island, which is not a land of opportunity at all. So there crowd on Ellis Island the wretched people

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whom America will not accept. Among the figures in that part of the harbour there was one that at once held my attention because she was so much greater and nobler than the rest. But she was not allowed on the mainland. Going close to her I saw that it was Liberty herself. She also was classed as undesirable. I will confess that I could understand the Amazons of the Mississippi fearing her, so great and strong was she, and of such mighty reputation. Her plight too was more wretched than that of the others, because they all stretched out their hands with longing to the further bank, as the poet has well sung, but with some hope also that there would one day be room for them in the quota. But Liberty had no quota at all'.

'What is this quota?' asked Lysis.

'The quota, dear Lysis', I said, 'is another of the mystic numbers of the Americans and one that serves their desires. For by means of varying numbers reached in an obscure manner they control the admission into their country in such a manner that very few can come of those who will be likely to resist having their souls made for them, but a greater number of those who yield easily to Americanization. In particular, is it contrived that hardly any of the Mediterranean peoples shall be admitted,

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for these peoples are the hardest of all to Americanize, as they have lived in civilization for so great a time'.

'I understand', said Lysis.

'But the people who are least unwelcome to-day are the partly civilized peoples of North Europe and the British Isles. For these people are not so wild as to be dangerous and they have lived in a hard struggle with nature which has made material prosperity seem to them an extremely great thing and one worthy of great efforts. Now material prosperity is what the Americans offer, and it is the inducement always held out when those who make opinion wish to persuade the populace to any particular course'.

'But', asked Phaelon, 'why did you not tell the undesirables what you knew about America, so that they would have been glad they had been shut out? It does not sound much fun being an alien in America to-day'.

'It would be grievous indeed', I said, 'did not the aliens live together in communities, but so banded they maintain their own life and reproduce Greece or Italy beyond the seas, as is the purpose of a colony. And it is a source of merriment to these men to be told to think American thoughts, as the judges say who make them citizens'.

'Yes', said Agathon, 'but it is not

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merriment for their children who become Americans'.

'They enjoy it', I said, 'for the children of bad Greeks make good Americans. And bad we must consider the Greeks to be who leave Greece and risk their souls in America for the sake of wealth. Such folk do nothing to lead the Americans to Greek thought'.

'Being such lovers of profit', said Agathon, 'they are timid and have little influence'.

'Yes', I said, 'but coming from civilization they have characters of their own, and are richly individual, for that is the mark of civilization, but having left Greece for gain they have no proper sense of being members of a political community, while the Americans are filled to excess with that sense. But an alien child brought up in America will often be both an individual and a citizen'.

Lysis here said: 'Might not such an alien child combine the faults rather than the virtues of both types?'

'That happens', I replied, 'and I have great fears for Xantippe's children if she keeps them there to be Americanized'.

'I may be a blockhead, Socrates', said Lysis, 'but I should like to hear you explain much more fully about the strength of the soul when it is Americanized'.

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‘ You are prepared to leave the address to the Business Men’s Lunch Club, then ’, said Agathon, ‘ and follow Socrates on a new path ? ’

‘ Yes ’, said Lysis, ‘ let us leave the business men. For my part I feel filled with pity for men leading such a life ’.

‘ That is well said, Lysis ’, I replied, ‘ for I, too, loved these men and had pity for them, seeing them to work harder than ever during the short hour of refreshment that their code allows them from business. I do not wonder that so many of them drop dead, and I often thought of the captives in the galleys being spurred on to exertions unnatural to man ’.

‘ Perhaps ’, said Agathon with a sly look at the other two, ‘ your standard of exertion, Socrates, is lower than that of most men ’.

‘ I know not how it is in your government office, Agathon ’, I replied, ‘ but I do not believe you would long survive the pace set in America, and, indeed, more and more Americans themselves are becoming sensible and ceasing to think a man admirable in proportion as he is always at his business. They have some excellent summer clubs, where they jest and play not for one day only but for several weeks. But I was going to tell Lysis that I can satisfy both his desire and yours, for if you, O Agathon, will tell the substance of

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my address to those men that will also reveal in what they are lacking, according to my opinion, and in what they are strong. For they are lacking in reasonableness, and they are strong in sociability'.

'Then let me read the report', said Agathon, and he read from the *Hootsville Courier* the paragraphs dealing with my address: "The President of the Club introduced the speaker as one who had made good in his own line, and though it was not their own line, they welcomed success wherever they saw it (*applause*). The visitor, as he understood it, was a specialist in truth and goodness, and would no doubt give Hootsville some useful tips. If he, the speaker, understood their visitor's vocation he was a person you went to consult if you became doubtful about your religion or your politics and he would make you more doubtful still (*laughter*). Fortunately, no one in Hootsville was troubled with any doubts, and he must say he could not see how their visitor would fit into the life there. Still it was a big world, and they could not all live in Iowa. He confessed that he had not known about the visitor till the question of this address was brought up, but since then had looked up his record and, from the reports of the debates that he had seen in the Plato publications, he had no doubt that their visitor had the

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best of his discussions back in Athens and had hit a home run every time. They welcomed him as a man who had won something, even if it was only an argument (*great applause*). That was what appealed to him, and he thought to all of them, for he did not claim to have read the reports closely or to know what the arguments had been about, but he felt clear their visitor had not come out second best. Hootsville could fairly claim to be listening to about the best man in his own line that old Athens could send them, and that would help them to see how Hootsville and Athens compared with one another (*applause*). He was reminded of a story about a negro, called Rastus . . .”

‘ Well ’, said Agathon, ‘ he told a long story about an Ethiopian, and sat down with laughter and applause.’ Agathon then read : “ The visitor, Mr. Socrates S. Socrates, was understood to say : ‘ Men of Hootsville, if you will bear with a stupid and ignorant man (*laughter*) I would like to correct what I am falsely supposed to think concerning liberty. I am not one of those who think that the ideal state will grant an indiscriminate liberty. For the rulers must regard liberty with caution. For I do not complain that here there is authority and that liberty is restricted, for that is necessary, but that the authority is in the hands of men in no

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way worthy to hold it and that the restrictions are not imposed for right objects but to achieve the mistaken notions of those holding chief influence in the land. I would not question your carelessness of liberty if you were restraining bad and selfish men, and I would applaud you if I saw the majority taking steps against too much interest in commerce. For commerce can do no more than provide the basis for the good life, but is treated here as though it were the good life itself. Indeed, you put notices, Men of Hootsville, in your offices to discourage the conversation of your friends, writing up: 'This is our busy day', and keeping up the notice for many days in succession; exhorting also your friends 'Come to the point, but don't camp on it', and these things hinder a friend from opening his soul. For there are many points upon which it is excellent to camp, and chief among them the nature of the good.

"I see everywhere around me refreshing signs of a growing interest in the Greeks on the part of the Americans. You have taken an extreme interest in the Olympic Games. Your young men love to band themselves into brotherhoods and fraternities named after the letters of our Greek alphabet, while older men band themselves together in a Klan with a Greek name, when they

BOOK III

would reform the general polity. I very greatly hope, Men of Hootsville, that it is not true, as your critics allege, that you are so careless and ignorant of Greek things that to you anything Greek is mysterious, and that these associations desire only to suggest secrecy and bewilderment when they name themselves with Greek names. Now we Greeks rightly understand liberty, for liberty is of the seas and of the mountains, and Greece has both indeed but Iowa neither. And your need in Iowa is for more Greeks to teach you (*vigorous dissent*).

‘More Greeks to help you to discover justice and the rule of reason, O men of Hootsville, about which you know nothing (*interruption*). For great things are here in issue, the greatest of those that are in our control. Much indeed of our human lot we cannot control. Consider how the poets speak concerning the Fates, how the three sisters sit, the one Clotho spinning the stuff of our human lives, and the next Lachesis, mixing the strands and measuring off the lengths, while the last, Atropos, cuts them with her dreaded shears. Men of Hootsville, we must all accept what the Fates send us, as they sit eternally weaving their varied combinations. If I may use your term, you must all do business with these three sisters. In the end you will find you cannot stand out against

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them'. But at that, said Agathon, there was a great uproar and they refused to listen any more, though Socrates had by no means reached even the middle of his address, and was but making a preliminary distinction.

'No self-respecting American business citizen, declared the President, red with anger, would have anything to do with a concern so out of date in factory methods as were these three sisters. Did their visitor know that they in Hootsville and everywhere else in the States, had machines which spun, measured, and cut thread in the single operation. And here there were three women employed all the time on what their American machine could do with a hundredth part of the time and effort. To come to a go-ahead community with such a fool proposition was an insult. Hootsville did not fear the competition of these Fates. Hootsville had been insulted as Chicago would not have been, just because Hootsville had not quite overhauled Chicago yet in population. But he could tell their visitor that that was coming, and would like to warn him that if he went on travelling on commission for these Fates and their underwear garments he had better quit advertising the obsolete process or he'd be railroaded out of every decent town. And it was time for everyone to hurry back to business'.

BOOK IV

After we had discussed these clubs a little longer, and I had given them the full speech I would have made in Hootsville, Lysis said: 'And is it true, Socrates, that the lecture-tour of Alcibiades also was not well received?'

'It is true', I answered.

'Yet is he not most brilliant and accomplished, and are not his brains, as he says, first-class?'

'Assuredly', I answered. 'But his manner was high-spirited, and he did not apply himself to win the favour of the Americans as though they had been the populace of Athens. He broke also, and that in a most shameless manner, the law which is the dearest to them of all their laws. He violated the Volstead Act'.

At this Agathon leaned forward and said: 'You must beware, O Lysis and Phaelon, of the Socratic irony, which has been the subject of a great deal of comment, and of which you are the victims at this moment. For it is well known that the Volstead Act is not dear to the Americans at all and that Alcibiades did nothing uncommon or scandalous in violating it'.

'Perhaps', said Phaelon, 'we should first understand clearly what this Volstead Act is'.

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'Why', I said, 'it is the law by which the Americans imposed upon themselves a most heavy sacrifice, and denied themselves in a loud voice that great pleasure of human life, wine'.

'Truly a heavy sacrifice', exclaimed both Lysis and Phaelon, and Lysis added the obvious question whether any reason could be found for such amazing conduct, for the folly natural to barbarians seemed wholly inadequate to account for it.

'It is indeed', I answered, 'a hard knot that we have to untangle, and one that will puzzle future generations. Many and various are the explanations put forward. Thus some philosophers point out that the sacrifice is being made in a time of great prosperity, and believe that it is intended to avert the jealousy of the gods. And there is much truth in that. For the Americans found themselves grown extremely rich, and, believing nothing to be so desirable as material prosperity, they feared lest the whole company of Olympus, both gods and goddesses, should resolve to become American citizens, and should achieve their ends by cunning or magic, despite the immigration Authorities. The Americans did not at all desire their company, partly through fear of the intensified and unscrupulous competition which it is the wont of the gods

BOOK IV

to indulge in, but chiefly because they consider that the gods, with the uncertain exception of Zeus himself, are not of Anglo-Saxon stock. To abate the edge of envy, they resolved to involve themselves in calamity and, by inserting privation into their Constitution, to create such a drawback to their country that not the divinities only but ordinary mortals also, should have no desire to share their life. You have heard how the maidens of Leucris, to protect their honour, slit off their noses and went undesired of the invading hordes. So also the Americans deemed it prudent to show to the world a mutilated life. They also believed that their own gods would be touched by the sight of such suffering and would augment the number of their other possessions, and they were strengthened in this view when they sent to consult their national oracle at Detroit. For the oracle said :—

In driest land,
'Neath steadiest hand,
The iron steed
Will fastest breed.

which they understood to mean that if they gave up all their potations there would be more cars. And this was decisive, for they think that everything, even life itself, is worthily sacrificed to increase the number of these cars. They believed furthermore that this sacrifice

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would increase the quantity of other things at their command'.

'I have heard a different reason', here put in Agathon, and seeing us nod to him to go on, he unfolded what follows :

'The Americans', he said 'are a shrewd people, and know that men easily become lovers of ease unless there is necessity or some great future delight to spur them on to exertion. How, they asked themselves, can the mechanics and other workers be kept from the desire for ease and the abandonment of intense daily toil. For a long time the desire to possess a car could be trusted to spur them on, but cars have grown cheap, and it is found beside that such objects tend by contrast to make men love real ease more than ever before. What was needed was to restore the right conception of wealth as something ardently to be longed for, for invention had too greatly levelled the lives of rich and poor. The poor man had motion and music and print and divorce and patent food and cremation, and everything that was once the privilege of the rich. Nature had made men equal in the chief goods like health and affection, thus seeming herself to render vain the end for which, as they thought, men had been created, the production of wealth. And they discovered that the devout worship of Progress, the very process of

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creating wealth, made the prize of private gain relatively less valuable, thus threatening the springs of energy itself. As extreme wealth gave men the pleasures of successful propaganda so must ordinary wealth have some special privilege attached. And therefore did their chief men resolve to prohibit by law one of life's greatest amenities, for if a thing is forbidden by the law, only the rich will enjoy it. For wealth everywhere lifts a man above the laws and nowhere more than in the United States'.

'Is it perhaps possible', asked Phaelon, 'that it was done from a noble desire to help the Europeans?'

'How, dear Phaelon?' I said.

'Why', he said, 'it is a great advantage to the Spartans to make their Helots drunk that the young Spartans may have before them the spectacle of drunkenness and be warned and seek temperance. It is surely an equal advantage for Europeans to have at hand a nation of teetotallers (I believe that is the word for such people) lest they should be tempted to err in the opposite direction to the Spartans. For I have read many notices about the great charity of America towards Europe and I wondered if it was this self-denial of which you speak'.

'That is not badly conceived, Phaelon', said I, 'but I am afraid we cannot take it

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as an explanation. In the first place the nations of Europe do not at all need to be warned, by example or otherwise, against teetotalism, and, secondly, the Americans are not at all a nation of teetotallers'.

'You mean', he said, 'that the rich can drink and do'.

'Not the rich only, but all who will take a little trouble', I answered.

'Then', said he, 'is it possible that this law has been imposed not to make teetotallers, but for the sake of the bribes of those who wish to break it?'

'Not so', I answered, 'for it costs the Americans a great deal of money to make this change in the way men drink. They employ many more policemen than before and if there is a bribe it is these men who keep it and not the State, and though the State gains something from the fines it imposes, yet it loses a great deal more by not being able to tax wine and the other drinks'.

Hereupon Lysis exclaimed: 'Then what is the real reason for such strange goings on. For my part, I believe they prohibit drinks by law in order to give an added flavour or zest to their drinking. For forbidden fruit is sweet to taste'.

'For the same reason, in fact', said Agathon, 'that they mix different drinks together, to get more stimulus. So that we

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may say that Prohibition and cocktails spring from the same source'.

'That explanation and the others, my worthy friends', I said, 'may help us to understand why so many are resigned to the privation. But very different is the true cause why they have poured out so vast a libation to Efficiency'.

'Explain it, then' said they all.

'Did we not agree earlier', I answered, 'that in America the State does many things that are not for its own good, and that are not done in the interests of the State itself, but that rich and energetic minorities could use the machinery of representative government to make their own will appear as the will of the State'.

'Indeed, yes', they said. 'And truly', said Agathon, 'and when he said earlier that the combination of the manufacturers and the preachers could never be resisted, I thought at once of this Prohibition'.

'It seemed to the interests of those two classes and the women', I said, 'and they brought it about. But such men commonly cannot judge what is to their own advantage. For the preachers are men who have chosen for themselves the task of moral leadership, and have commonly great earnestness and little else. You know, Lysis, that the preachers are those who have separated themselves from the priests and the old religious traditions?

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Indeed it was largely by such preachers and their close followers that the first colonies were founded in America'.

'The priests themselves', said Lysis, 'are surely not enemies to drink'.

'By Hercules, no', I said.

'That means much', said Agathon.

'The priests', I continued, 'took to Aristotle generations ago, and have held by his teachings in a most striking manner. For Aristotle's mind is much like a corkscrew, being tortuous but powerful, and opening up worthy things for our satisfaction. His reputation has surprised me somewhat, seeing how often he is wrong. For he is in general too easily satisfied, and thinks that because a thing exists it is therefore justified. But what he has written about preserving the mean of temperance is excellent, and to that the priests have adhered. The United States, however, is a preachers' country. Now the preachers are opposed by their natures to the humane and easy enjoyment of life, and would sacrifice temperance to avoid excess. For they rightly hold drunkenness to be a degrading thing, but wrongly suppose abstinence to be superior to moderation or temperance. Now while they preached against drunkenness they did no harm, but they made in my opinion a great mistake when they stirred up the women to tamper with the laws'.

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‘Is that what they did?’ asked Lysis.

‘Yes’, I said, ‘though the women did not want much persuading, for it seemed obvious to them that money spent by men in obtaining the enjoyment that friends gain by drinking together was wasted money while the same money spent in adorning the women themselves or their offspring was money profitably spent. For they were eager to believe such things’.

A great look of understanding came into the eyes of both Lysis and Phaelon, and Lysis said:—

‘Prohibition then is in large measure a part of that tyranny of the women of which you spoke a little while back?’

‘Why, yes’, I replied, ‘they were strong enough both by the votes that they enjoyed in many States and by their ascendancy over their men to pass this law. For it was a strong alliance. The manufacturers also had great influence with the men, for they kept repeating that all the other trades would share more money if the wine trade was forbidden by the law, and in each man the trading part of the soul fought with the reasonable part, and with many of the Americans it conquered. And each man thought that he could himself evade the law’.

‘Did many say that, Socrates?’ asked Lysis.

‘No’, I answered; ‘they use other

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words. They say that such a law is a good thing for the country, by which they mean that it is helping their business without changing their private habits. While others again, both men and women, are of the nobler sort, and will gladly make a personal sacrifice, in the belief that it will help the poor. There are many rich women who regard the poor as their family, and seek their good as a mother seeks that of her children. Such are called Social Reformers'.

'But are not the poor grown up?' asked Phaelon.

'Of course', I answered; 'but the rich have different ideas from theirs, especially if the poor are from south Europe. So the rich busy themselves to change the character of the poor. When they are doing that they call themselves by a high-sounding title, and say they are Practical Idealists'.

'I understand', said Lysis, 'for the rich are the manufacturers, or share the outlook of manufacturers, and when they are considering the character of the poor, they will identify being a good man with being a good worker, and will give no praise at all to such a one as you yourself, Socrates, forever sitting about in the public places and busying yourself with subjects with which manufacturers have nothing to do'.

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‘ You have understood perfectly, O excellent Lysis ’, I exclaimed, ‘ and you well describe what happens in America to-day, and among other things why the manufacturers have abolished, as far as they could, the drinking of the poor. For it is perhaps better for a workman to be a teetotaller if you consider him merely in his function as a workman, and as a machine to be treated in a certain way, but it is quite a different story if you consider him as a man. For teetotalism makes a worker more a worker but a man less a man. And drunkenness makes him also less a man, but instead of becoming more of a workman he ceases to be a workman at all ’.

‘ But teetotalism ’, said Agathon, ‘ is the more dangerous extreme. For only a very exceptional man can keep really drunk for long periods whereas many teetotallers stay teetotallers for months together ’.

‘ Many months ’, I agreed.

‘ And even years in some cases, Socrates ’, he went on, ‘ if what I hear is true ’.

‘ Why, yes ’, I said, ‘ I’m afraid we cannot deny it: there are men in Kansas who have repressed their thirst for upwards of forty years ’.

‘ Surely ’, said Lysis, ‘ we would pay more to see them exhibited here than the

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Americans would pay to see the Parthenon? Let us give the Parthenon to that American who approached you this morning, Agathon, and let us have some Kansans'.

'Yes', I said, 'such a group of voluntary Tantaluses would be a spectacle of much interest to the young, who are commonly insensible to the griefs of others, and who would not think it base to let their eyes have their fill of the dreadful sight. But I confess my heart was touched, for the state of these Kansans is like that of the ponies that are kept in coal pits, who by long habituation to the dark become blind. And to their children these people show imaginary pictures of the inside of the human body and the effects of alcohol, for so they love to call all fermented beverages, so that these children shall believe they are being saved from a most terrible dragon. Nor is it till they visit Europe that they learn that the poison of alcohol is not always fatal'.

'It is a good thing for the Americans that so many of them visit Europe', said Lysis gravely.

'Yes', I said, 'for I met a man in Kansas who had never been out of Kansas and who refused to believe that I was a human being at all. For he said that Science had shown that alcohol was a poison, and as the Europeans were known

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from history books to have made a habit of consuming large quantities of this poison, it followed that they were all dead. And he declared that the present peoples in Europe were nothing but a race of apes pretending to be the same creatures that Science showed alcohol to have destroyed. He said the apes were doing it to win the affection that the Americans would show to other human beings, however degraded, but not to apes'.

'Truly a striking view', exclaimed Lysis.

'It was one that explained everything to my friend', I answered. 'He declared the pretence could not last, and that the apes had accordingly begun to spread a story round that all men, even the Americans, were kinsfolk to the apes. But with this, he said, he and all good hundred per cent Americans would have nothing whatever to do, and he added they were prepared if necessary to disprove it by an amendment to the Constitution. He claimed, moreover, that this view of his gave by far the best explanation of the chattering and quarrelling that was forever going on over in Europe. And he added that my appearance corroborated his theory'.

'Well, Socrates', said Agathon, 'you must allow us to excuse him there'.

'So did I excuse him', I answered, 'for

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I knew that that man was intoxicated, not indeed by wine, but by statistics, for the Americans find in statistics a drug more powerful than alcohol, the women shamelessly revealing their craving and attending lectures, and crying out for facts, but meaning these numbers. For all large numbers and all numbers arranged in patterns have a magical power over them. And they will eagerly deny their own personal experience if it seems to upset what the statistics say'.

'Truly a pitiable servitude', murmured Lysis.

'Pitiable indeed', I agreed, 'but they wear these chains of numbers proudly, for in general the numbers are large. And they have no notion that these numbers must be used with care, but will let themselves be led into any error by any cunning piper luring them to destruction, provided only that he can pipe the proper magic ciphers and talk to them of percentages. For these statisticians have more power to make great crowds follow them than ever Orpheus had. But I expect that in the end they will most of them meet with the fate of Orpheus and be torn to pieces by angry women, filled with a different kind of madness'.

'Well', said Agathon, 'there is one thing very hopeful for them and of excellent augury'.

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‘ Which ? ’ I asked.

‘ Why ’, he said, ‘ when they consider the number of their crimes and how much blood is shed and treasure seized each year, do you not think they will be greatly impressed and will realize that their chief trouble is that the laws are not kept and that obedience is not enforced ? ’

‘ I do ’, I agreed.

‘ And are they not an active people and one ready to make experiment, even to experiment with European usages ? ’

‘ I believe so ’.

‘ Well ’, he said, ‘ will they not be forced to realize that they were the very last people in the world who should have attempted Prohibition, for they cannot even protect human life well. For if they had been a very poor people, fighting for a share in the commerce of nations, and endowed with a tradition of law observance, then they might have attempted this further discipline. But the Americans were not poor, nor were they desperately in need of such efficiency. Indeed no people could better afford to drink ’.

‘ Yes ’, I said, ‘ and their laws were the last laws that could stand the strain. For they have never been well kept, and there has always been corruption. So that they did not do well when they outlawed a permanent human appetite and made another enemy to the law ’.

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‘Did you keep the law yourself, Socrates?’ said Lysis, ‘for you always say that even a bad law should be obeyed because it is the law’.

‘Why’, I answered, ‘thinking as I do, and being the guest of the Americans, I would take no step to avoid the abstinence that the law imposed. Yet I must confess that there was no city in which I went unrefreshed’.

‘A great thing is friendship’, exclaimed Lysis.

‘Yes’, I said, ‘my friends and hosts everywhere insisted, not all of them everywhere, but some in every place, who sought me out, knowing that I was from the Mediterranean’.

‘And when these drinks were offered to you, Socrates’, demanded Lysis, looking me straight in the face and fixing his eyes on mine, ‘did you still tell them that all laws should be obeyed until they can be altered?’

‘Assuredly’.

‘What did they answer?’

‘That I was to drink my fill, and not be at all uneasy lest I was breaking any law, because it was lawful to drink the wine that you possessed in your cellar before the law was made. It seems it was always such wine that I was drinking. Nor did they seem to fear that they would ever exhaust those cellars of theirs’.

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‘ Happy Socrates ’, they said.

‘ They urged moreover, when they were not too busy to discuss the point, that a law among them is not at all the same as a law among the Athenians. They said that perhaps in Athens, which was small, the people made the law knowing what they did, but that in America thousands and thousands of laws were made every year. America was equally the paradise of her who would make a law and him who would break one, and in proportion as the existing laws were not kept was there a clamour for fresh laws. But there is no sense of responsibility, either in the making or the breaking. And we would do well, my wonderful friends, to give this advice to the Americans that they should treat a law as a great luxury, to be cherished as Helen herself was cherished. Then when they find they are observing all, or some part at least, of the laws they have, they may reward themselves by a new law. Do those who juggle and balance plates seek to add another plate to the row standing edge-ways on their noses or foreheads before they can balance those they already have ? ’

‘ Indeed no, Socrates ’, they replied.

‘ And if they did ’, I continued, ‘ would they not break all their plates and not receive any plaudits from the spectators ’.

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'Such', said Lysis, 'would be their deserved misfortune'.

'And should we not call such jugglers presumptuous fools and men unskilled in their art?'

'What else, indeed, O Socrates?'

'And yet is their case any different from that of these Americans who before they can well keep ten laws will make fifty more? So that the law ceases to hold authority among them and they are careless who makes it and who breaks it. For there can be no more grievous ill done to any state than that its citizens should not think rightly about the laws, and should forget that a good law is the expression of Justice, allotting to each man what is his, and is deserving of all reverence, while a bad law destroys the life of the state and ought by all means to be abolished as soon as possible'.

'We agree', they said.



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‘Does it not seem to you, oh Lysis and Phaelon, that these Americans suffer many grievous evils, and do not know where they are, and may truly be called Atlantis, the Lost Continent?’

‘Lost, indeed, Socrates’, answered Lysis, ‘and I pity them, though it is largely their own fault’.

‘And do you not think’, I asked, ‘that education might help them, if it were begun when they were quite young and kept up till thirty-five?’

‘It would be worth trying’, they said, ‘but not safe to stop at thirty-five’.

‘You remember’, I continued, ‘how in our ideal State we used to agree that there must be a guardian class chosen from those of the best natures and trained up to watch over the life of the state and to govern the ordinary citizens’.

‘Yes, Socrates’.

‘But it seems plain that in America the duties of these guardians, such as suppressing and encouraging opinions and the like, have been usurped by manufacturers and people of that sort who ought never to be given any power at all’.

‘Such is the unhappy truth in America’.

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'We must therefore educate a guardian class for the Americans who shall drive these usurpers from their position of influence and lead the Americans towards wisdom'.

'We must'.

'And shall we draw our guardians from men or from women?'

'As it is America, from women', suggested Phaelon.

'I agree', I said, 'we will make women guardians, for we are desperate and the proverb speaks truly:—

Desperate diseases need desperate remedies.

And we will do so for several reasons. For in the first place such an arrangement will seem natural to the Americans themselves, and the poet has well written:

Nature is strong.

'And secondly the women live longer and we shall be able to train them more thoroughly. And thirdly, the women show some interest in philosophy, while the men are hopeless. For the women think they know something when in fact they know nothing, but the men are not even aware that there is anything to know. And fourthly the women are accustomed to leisure, and do not fear or despise it, for the men have passed it on to them, not knowing what to do with it themselves'.

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‘ But there is a better reason than any of these ’, said Agathon.

‘ What is that ? ’ asked Lysis.

‘ Why, that the American women are exceedingly agreeable when they are young. Or did you not think so, Socrates ? ’

‘ I did think so ’, I said, ‘ and though I did not mention it, I will confess it was the chief reason. They are not so attractive as our Grecian youths, indeed, but they are attractive all the same. For in America the individuals, both youths and maidens and women, but chiefly the maidens, are full of lovableness and goodwill when they are young, but are very quickly brought under the tyranny of propaganda and betrayed by riches and the sense of efficiency into a false valuing of what is to be aimed at in living ’.

‘ Begin quickly ’, said Agathon, ‘ and let us see you open this college for young women, for I take it from what you say you would not wish Xantippe to control so important a matter ’.

‘ By the dog, no ’, I cried.

‘ Then ’, said Agathon, ‘ let us found our college ’.

‘ By all means ’, I said, ‘ but first let us see whether any of the existing universities and colleges will be of any use to us, for there are many hundreds of them ’.

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‘Indeed, Socrates’, said Lysis in surprise, ‘many hundred colleges? I should not have supposed there were any at all’.

I had been of this opinion, and I said: ‘I had not supposed so either, for I thought no educated person would be willing to listen to Xantippe, but I soon learned the answer to my puzzle, for nothing is easier in America than to attend college and nothing harder than to get educated’.

‘It seems certain that we shall have to change much’, said Lysis.

‘Yes’, I answered, ‘for at present they educate the men and the women together though they are going to do different work afterwards and so should receive a different training’.

‘Yes’, they said, ‘we must alter that, and not educate any more of the men’.

‘That will go far to solve one of our problems, for at present the chances of education are destroyed by the numbers of the students, and the Americans think it finer to give a smattering of information to everybody than to give education to a few, and talk with pride of the preposterous numbers that pass through their colleges’.

‘If there are so many students, Socrates’, asked Phaelon, ‘is there not a great body of teachers? What part do

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they play in America and could not they be the guardians ? ’

‘ Why ’, I said, ‘ of all who suffer from the present ill-ordered life there, none suffer more than do these teachers. But if you will be patient with me I will describe how they live ’.

‘ Proceed, Socrates ’.

‘ To begin with, does it not seem to you that those who separate themselves so sharply from the popular outlook and embrace the pursuit of learning rather than that of wealth will be no ordinary Americans, but will either be above or below their fellow citizens ’.

‘ It would seem so, indeed ’, they answered.

‘ The best ’, I said, ‘ are much above their fellows and seek this life from a noble love of noble things. Do you know what happens to a great number of such men in America ? ’

‘ What ? ’ they asked with apprehension.

‘ You do well to look frightened ’, I said gravely. ‘ They are made Presidents of universities and colleges, and after that there is no peace for them at all. But they are compelled to spend all their time like the generals of disorderly and worthless troops, organizing the great numbers of their students and providing useless courses for countless blockheads.

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Moreover, they are driven to associate with the men of commerce and to flatter them for their great wealth'.

'Why in the world should they have to do that?' Lysis demanded.

'To make the college bigger', I replied. 'For the Americans estimate a President by his power to obtain benefactions and so to build new wings and offices, and leave a larger institution than he found. They are soon to build in America the tallest university in the world. And there is a worse consequence even than this waste of fine men in presidential duties'.

'What can be worse than that?'

'Why', I said, 'with all the colleges competing for the gifts of rich men will not those colleges obtain most whose teachers teach what the rich men like to have believed?'

'Naturally'.

'And where a college has much to hope from wealthy persons will it not hesitate to lose large sums of money rather than discourage free inquiry into everything?'

'I think it will do more than hesitate, it will sacrifice the inquiries for the gold'.

'Indeed', I said, 'it often happens, and the teachers do not dare to discuss freely the most important matters. But they are fearful of the opinion of the prosperous and they dread the crowd as no philosopher

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ought to do. They are careful not to examine closely into the deepest questions of all touching morality and the nature of the gods. They are equally afraid of the question how wealth should be divided and how the state should behave to private riches. So that in the one place where you might hope to see the existing system examined freely, you do not find any such free spirit of questioning, but a nervous desire to give satisfaction to the powerful element of society'.

'Rich men can avail much,' said Lysis, 'though they be base, mechanical fellows'.

'Why', I replied, 'did I not say a moment ago that some who embraced academic life were above their fellows but others indeed beneath'.

'Yes', they said.

'And you did not understand me?'

'No'.

'Why', I said, 'I meant that many embrace teaching not from any high-minded aloofness to commerce or love of knowledge, but because it is the easiest employment they can find and they shirk the labour of business life. Such men are not really students at all, and spend their lives repeating over and over the small stock of information they gathered in early life. These inferior teachers live the life of donkeys or mules working a water-wheel, treading for ever round and round

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the same narrow course after they have once learned how the routine goes'.

At which Lysis exclaimed: 'Truly a miserable existence'.

'Wretched, indeed', echoed Agathon, 'and one that does more harm than good, for the majority of their students despise them, rightly guessing that they would be prosperous business men if they knew how it was done, and so the things of the mind are brought into dishonour'.

'Yes', I said, 'but we must not blame the teachers that they avoid an unequal contest. For already they have sacrificed much to pursue their calling. Moreover a noble minority strives as bravely as did Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans, preferring all sacrifices before servitude to the barbarian hosts. But these men will agree with us'.

'Will most of the teachers be with us?' asked Lysis.

'Alas', I said, 'the most part of the teachers are not valiant'.

'What do they fear?', asked Phaelon, 'for they know that they will never become at all like Croesus. It is not a happy thing to be like Croesus'.

'No, Phaelon', I said. 'They have no great ambition, as it seems to me. Rather are they driven by fear. They fear, Phaelon, what the rich will do to them'.

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‘What?’

‘They might take away their cars. For they have bought cars for which they have not paid, promising to do so by a life of labour. And the rich might take them away. Then, indeed, the poor teachers would have to become philosophers of the Peripatetic School’.

‘They would not love you, Socrates’, said Lysis, ‘if they heard you speak unfeelingly like that’.

‘As it is’, I answered, ‘they do not love the Greeks, and do not think a knowledge of Greece anything but a strange superfluity. They do not consider it a necessity at all’.

‘Then we will not allow such people to teach in our ideal America’, exclaimed Lysis, hotly.

‘Indeed no’, I said, ‘for in our college we will have no necessity for a large staff, and so we will not have any of these sham teachers lowering the dignity of learning’.

‘That will be a great gain’.

‘There are already some small colleges in America which can help us’.

‘How so?’

‘Why, they are colleges that deliberately limit their numbers. Often they refuse to train more than five hundred students at a time’.

‘Five hundred students!’ echoed Lysis—
‘you call that a small number’.

‘No’, I said, ‘but the Americans do,

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and if you had been among them you would realize that it is indeed a heroic sacrifice that they make in opposing the common tendency and remaining small'.

'And how are they to help us?'

'Why, in the first place we shall find, I think, the best material for our guardians among the pupils there, and secondly we can use these colleges as nurseries and training grounds for assistants for our guardians. Or do you not think they will need assistants in their task of giving a changed outlook to the Americans?'

'Indeed, yes, Socrates'.

'And another thing we will altogether change is the great variety of the instruction. For that the Americans have no idea of the purpose of education is seen in the way they provide courses of instruction in everything, even in the things that will only fit a man for low and base employments. The student hurries from course to course and becomes acquainted with the preliminaries of many studies but is advanced in none'.

'We will keep our guardians to a few studies', said Lysis.

'Yes', I said, 'and they will have to be very different studies'.

'What will be the first great change?' he asked.

'Why', I answered, 'as it seems to me, the first thing to destroy is their

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superstitious reverence for what they call facts and their contempt for ideas. For they will often talk as if ideas were less real than facts, instead of more real'.

'What are these facts?'

'They may be anything. Lists of names, and long technical words are accepted as facts. The biggest fact is the Divine Fact, Progress, which they worship'.

'Might not that be called an idea?'

'You might say so, Lysis', I answered, 'but I would advise you not to do so, for the Americans dearly love Progress and will not tolerate your insults'.

'Is not evolution another favourite fact?' asked Agathon.

'Why', I said, 'some cherish it as much as Progress, of which they say that it is the explanation. But others say that Progress presides over the Americans by the special wish of the divine powers, as a reward for their virtues. And these say evolution is a lie. But neither party will be content to say it is a theory'.

'And facts are what they teach in their colleges?' asked Phaelon.

'Yes', I said, 'for they have heard that knowledge is power, and they desire power, and they think that knowledge consists of information'.

'I have seen them myself, Socrates', said Agathon, 'running about as students, boasting of the number of courses they

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could take and of the daily information that they could gather into notebooks'.

'Yes', I said, 'they are complacent, and are sure that when they have information they will instinctively act wisely and well. For we must remember that in a democracy men love to think they themselves are deciding the great questions of life and of the State. And in America they are very much on their dignity in this, being resolved to judge for themselves from the facts, of which they love to speak, and not to value the opinion of each other'.

'Except of experts, Socrates', said Agathon.

'Indeed, they value experts because experts, they think, know the facts. And so two rules are to be observed carefully by all who would make the Americans think one thing rather than another. First you must call yourself an expert and second you must call everything you say the facts'.

'And then all will go well with you?' asked Lysis.

'Indeed, yes, for none of them know anything about the matters in hand and so they are prepared to hear that the facts are anything in the world'.

'Well, Socrates', said Phaelon, 'it sounds to me a fine pastime to go persuading these great herds of barbarians

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that Persians are finer people than Greeks'.

'Yes', I said, 'they could easily be made to believe that or any other piece of nonsense'.

'Would it not be fun?' said Phaelon eagerly. 'I must do it. Nor will I fear the perils of the country. I will go boldly among them as becomes a Greek, resisting their hold-up men with my sword and opposing their cars with my shield'.

'You must take care', I said, 'that they do not fell you from behind with a card-index'.

'Card-index?' said Phaelon; 'what weapon is that?'

'It is more than a weapon to the Americans', I said: 'it is everything. It is the symbol of their way of life and they intend shortly to put it on all their coins, and stamps. It is like a plank to a drowning sailor, for by its means they survive in the great heaving oceans of facts with which they would otherwise be overwhelmed. Or you may think of them as a nation of Ariadnes'.

'That is certainly a more pleasant picture', said Agathon, 'and for my part I will take care to think of them like that. For as Ariadne had a thread whereby her lover might find his way out of the Labyrinth, so have the Americans card-

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indexes to prevent themselves from getting wholly lost in the modern world'.

At this Phaelon exclaimed: 'I should dearly love to see what was inside a card-index'.

'That would not be easy', I answered. 'For they are compiled with great solemnity and reverence and are the nearest things in America to sacred objects. The ritual of compilation is the chief way of practising efficiency and so of worshipping Progress'.

'But what is on the cards?' insisted Lysis.

'The most sacred things of all—entrancing statistics and The Facts, and all the things that Modern Science teaches'.

'Tell us, Socrates, who is this Modern Science?'

'A divine priestess', I answered, 'who is invoked in all difficulties, whose words are received with great reverence, and that though her oracles are more than usually incomprehensible and fickle and her words long and horrible. But she is dear to the Americans because she speaks principally about machines, and tells them there shall be more and more of them, and an increasing number of parts in each'.

'And does she speak true things?' demanded Lysis.

'She knows about machines and the

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substances of the earth, and so the Americans find her "practical", a word of supreme praise, and in consequence are forever seeking to make her speak on other matters where she has no gift of utterance. They seek encouragement in their beliefs about themselves and insist upon an answer about their race till in self-defence she takes refuge in gibberish'.

'That is a disappointment to them', said Lysis.

'In no wise', I answered, 'for each can twist her answer to his desires. And she is surrounded by people crying that they have heard her voice and they alone, and using her authority for their own views. It is from this babble of tongues that the facts for the card-indexes are derived. But we will train our guardians never to use such things and to consider them only fit for slaves'.

'We will', they said.

'For their studies will not be the acquisition of information, which is a training in acquisitiveness and due to the hunger of their souls for quantity. They acquire information as a second best until they can acquire wealth. But our guardians will study those matters which satisfy the reason and those which elevate the soul. Now these studies are many'.

'You have described such studies many times, Socrates', said they all.

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‘ And do you not agree ? ’

‘ We agree ’, said they all again.

‘ And shall we ’, I asked them next, ‘ permit our guardians to live in sisterhoods and sororities as they like to do to-day ? ’

‘ Do the young American women live much in sisterhoods ? ’ asked Phaelon, ‘ for I have read of sisterhoods and of convents, and the great principle of the life is to have nothing whatever to do with men ’.

I reassured Phaelon. ‘ An American sorority is not at all like that. But I think we shall have to say that no men may go near these sororities where we are training our guardians, at least till our guardians have reached thirty-five. For the men are a great distraction ’.

‘ Yes ’, said Agathon, ‘ we don’t want any young American men, for they are excellent to carry out what they are told but they will never make philosophers. They will correspond indeed to that warrior class which you provided for in your ideal state, but there will be this difference that they will not often be called upon to fight and that their chief duties will be in the ordinary administration, arranging for food and other necessities, and holding the various positions in commerce ’.

‘ Is commerce still to continue ? ’ said Phaelon.

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‘We must allow it’, I said, ‘the Americans being what they are, but we will take care that it receives no particular honour’.

‘Very well’, he said, ‘but how are we to keep the women from the men?’

‘We must bring them all to Athens’, I said.

At this Agathon leaned forward eagerly and exclaimed: ‘And it is agreed that I am to select the guardians, and I will bring them to Athens and will myself superintend their training. And when we get a new generation I will superintend the later stages of their training, from fifteen to thirty-five, while you, Socrates, who are so patient and good with the young shall take charge of them till they are fifteen’.

‘Indeed’, I said.

‘Yes’, he said, ‘I consider that as settled’.

‘But I am troubled with a difficulty’, said Lysis, ‘and one which may put out all Agathon’s fine plans, for I do not see how we can educate them in Athens’.

‘How not?’ said Agathon angrily.

‘Why’, said Lysis, ‘if they come here they will meet the Greek men and will see that there are beings much superior to themselves and lose their belief in themselves, and fall into despair and pine away’.

‘We will unbend’, said Agathon.

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' Even so, my excellent friend ', I said, ' I think Lysis speaks truly : it will not be good for guardians to grow up among people so much superior to themselves. For they will have to rule a race of untravelled and completely self-confident people, and they will never do it if they are doubtful of themselves '.

' I can loosen the knot of difficulty ', said Agathon : ' I will build my college a little way out of Athens, and when you come to give them your instructions you shall be concealed by a partition and I will say you are the gods themselves. Nay, there is a machine called the broadcast in use in America itself which enables men to practise useful deceptions of that kind '.

' I think not, my friends ', I said. ' They have suffered already from being told that too abundantly, and I think it will be best to tell them a myth while they are in their cradles, saying they are the children of the people of Atlantis, and the sisters in some sort of the Greeks '.

' Better say cousins ', corrected Agathon.

' The cousins, then, of the Greeks. And then they shall learn with the pride of our own youth and maidens both gymnastic and music and all the other studies which we agreed to be necessary for our guardians '.

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Here Lysis said: 'There is still one small matter to be resolved: How are you going to get your guardians, and the first supply of young girls to train? For their men will not part with them'.

'That is easy', I said, 'as they are Americans, and the men do not control the women'.

Lysis looked puzzled: 'But surely the mothers control the daughters, at any rate when they are very young'.

'Why, no', I said, 'that rarely happens' either. We will invite such of the young girls as seem to us to be the best endowed by nature and to be likely to make good guardians and to be susceptible of education, no matter whether they be five or fifteen, and they will come if we convince them, whatever the parents may think. For I assure you that their parents have no power over them at all'.

'Really, Socrates', said Lysis, 'I cannot believe that some of these great women of the Middle West do not rule their children by terror as well as their husbands'.

'If we find that to be so', I said, 'and some of the presidents of these Women's Clubs are indeed so overpowering that it may well prove to be the case, we can easily convince the parents by a few statistics. We will tell them that the liver corrodes and that metabolism is inhibited

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unless the years from fifteen to thirty-five are spent in Athens. And as that will be Science that we are telling them they will send their children to Athens. For they all honestly desire the well-being of their children, even those who are permanent presidents of their clubs'.

'We may take it, then, O Socrates', said Agathon, eagerly, 'that the young women will be here soon'.

'And when they are here', I said, 'they shall live in sororities as they do to-day. And I think their present sororities are a foreshadowing of their life here, and that now they do what they can, but live in a dark cave compared with the bright sunlight of their coming existence. To-day they know little Greek, three letters being the general standard, but soon they will speak and think in Greek all the time'.

'And when we have educated them', asked Lysis, 'will it be a difficult matter for them to obtain authority to rule in America?'

'Well', said Agathon, 'it will be easy if they have enough money'.

'That will be easy', I said, 'for they will be trained to consider it their duty that each of them marries a millionaire'.

'They will find that easy', said Agathon, 'for I will be careful to instruct them in the arts of courtship'.

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Lysis then asked: 'But when they have these funds at their command, what will be the quickest way for them to persuade the ordinary Americans to accept their rule?'

'Why', I said, 'they must proclaim a Philosophy Week, for these weeks are not expensive to buy and they give you the right to worry people for seven days'.

'And what shall they say?' asked Phaelon.

'It will be simple enough', I said. 'They must announce a new way to national and individual prosperity. For prosperous peoples are forever looking for ways to prosperity. And the adjective new recommends anything'.

'And then, Socrates?'

'And then they must proclaim that Philosophy is the key to Bigger and Better Business, and must tell the story of Thales, who was a philosopher and easily outwitted the men of commerce of his day, amassing a fortune in olive presses'.

'But Thales lived long ago'.

'That must be kept dark', I said; 'but the story will throw a new light on philosophy and if the propaganda is well done every progressive business house will add to its staff a philosopher from Greece. And our guardians must go about persuading the women that there will be no real progress till Congressmen are

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philosophers or philosophers Congressmen'.

'Why yes, Socrates', said Agathon, 'you shall yourself question the aspirants for Congress and say which are truly philosophers and the guardians will persuade the populace not to vote for any of the others. And you shall select trusty Greeks who will hand over power to the guardians'.

'It will take the fortunes of many husbands', I said, 'but in the end the guardians will control the central government, and then they can do what they like with the country, and make brave changes and substitute a noble rule for an ignoble one'.

'It is important to lose no time', said Agathon, 'in bringing the maidens to Athens. For the sake of saving the Americans', he added.

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‘And are you resolved, Socrates,’ said Lysis, ‘not to give any sort of education to the American men?’

I thought for a moment and then said : ‘They are not comely like our Greek youths and they would not be an ornament to Athens. I do not think they want any education’.

‘But, Socrates’, said Lysis, ‘how are they to spend their time when they are young?’

‘Why’, I said, ‘I would let them go on watching that football game of theirs’.

‘What is that?’

‘It is a mimic battle dear to all their hearts, and I would let them watch it all the day, and I would not trouble their minds at all. For to watch it will be the right education for them’.

‘Watch it, Socrates?’ demanded Lysis.

‘Yes, for it is played between coaches or chief men, using young men as pieces’.

‘Explain it to us’, they said.

‘I will give you a fine lecture upon it’, I said; ‘and you will marvel that I know so much, until I first confess that I went much among the young Americans in the colleges from a desire to see into

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their minds, and what I saw made it clear to me that America was rightly called the land of "great open spaces". For they spoke of nothing else at all but this football, and cars, and to a lesser extent, of another form of contest called baseball'.

'Would you let them play baseball also', asked Lysis.

'If we do', I replied, 'I expect we shall have to be quick to save it. For many business men told me that the manufacturers will forbid it, because it distracts their workmen from their factory tasks. They propose to substitute universal compulsory basket ball, which will keep their workers fit but unexcited'.

'Is not football in danger?' said Agathon.

'It is most completely a students' spectacle', I answered, 'and I think our guardians will be in time to save it, and thus make their rule delightful to the young men'.

'Explain about this game', said Lysis, 'and why you will still allow them to watch it'.

Then I told them of the field marked out in lines, the gridiron and of the teams of sixty or seventy warriors a side, of whom only eleven might do battle at any one time. I described the armour of these warriors, and how they were the widest and weightiest of all the young

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Americans, fit foemen for Ajax or Hector. And I explained the discipline under which they lived and how the combinations were worked out by the coaches as a general prepares his campaign, and how the men learnt over and over the cipher signs that told to each his part in the brief struggle. And I told of the fine tradition that made it disgraceful to flee from the field or avoid the ball, even for commercial benefits, and I told of the heroes who preferred fierce hacks to the displeasure of their coach and death on the field to his being dismissed.

‘It must be good fun being a coach’, said Lysis.

‘Yes’, I said, ‘they are held in great honour provided they bring victory. They do what they will with the minds and bodies of the students, and the Professors are proud to carry water for them. Often the chosen students are kept shut up by their coaches before any great battle, lest their minds should be disturbed. That will be a good similitude for us to use when we are moving the young girls to Athens. For we deserve as great privileges as games coaches’.

‘But in these contests’, said Lysis, ‘only a few can be used. What is the education of the vast majority?’

‘They cheer to order’, I replied. ‘For the Americans are a practical people and

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scheme that no single breath shall be wasted, but shall be used where it will be most effective. Moreover the game is so designed that the better it is played the more difficult is it for the onlooker to follow the fortunes of the ball, the players struggling in a great bunch, pushing against one another. There must be some heralds to tell the crowd which player has been pushing hardest that he may be rewarded with a loud shout '.

'But is shouting like that really the best education?' asked Lysis, 'for you will have to say a lot more to convince me '.

'Have you not often agreed with me, Lysis, that it is in youth one learns most easily? '

'I agree '.

'And that it is good to master early those activities which are to fill our after-lives? '

'Very often it is good '.

'And if you had to describe in one sentence the civic life of an American could you do it better than by saying he spent his life shouting in chorus praise or blame about things he did not understand at the bidding of leaders? '

'It is true '.

'Then, can he begin too early to shout with the crowd? '

'He cannot '.

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‘For if he is by nature incapable of philosophy he must be led, and he must be brought up to expect to feel to order without asking what it is about which he is to be enthusiastic, and without expecting to understand the details of the struggles his leaders are conducting’.

‘I agree’.

‘And for that there is nothing better than these football games. For men who obey coaches and cheer leaders now will be ready to obey our guardians later on’.

‘I think so’.

‘And they enjoy this football of theirs a great deal more than they enjoy the lectures and other parts of college life, so that they will agree very happily to cheer football all the time’.

‘But’, said Agathon, ‘I hear the friends of peace are resolved to prohibit the football game, because it arouses admiration for martial qualities’.

‘The friends of peace will fail my friends’, I said. ‘For freedom from foreign wars reigns among the Americans from their position rather than their disposition. The only people who have ever invaded them are the English. But now it is the other way about’.

‘I believe’, said Agathon, ‘that to-day the English and the Americans are very well disposed toward one another’.

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'They are', I answered. 'Their friendship is much the chief friendship among barbarian peoples. For the English regard the Americans as their country cousins, living in the backwater of the New World and out of touch with London life, but pleased to come and gape. And they consider them as country cousins with a very rich farm, from which they and their neighbours often receive eggs, and they are careful to keep as friendly as they can. For they imagine the Americans to be much like themselves, but without their advantages'.

'By advantages do they mean the nearness to Athens?' said Phaelon.

'Yes', I said slowly: 'If you search the matter to the bottom it comes to that, for the English are the link between Athens and America'.

Then Phaelon said: 'Is it true, Socrates, that the English and the Americans speak the same language?'

'No'.

'But', went on Phaelon, puzzled, 'they understand each other after a fashion, do they not? Do they use their hands to speak with?'

'Only in New York'.

'Socrates speaks truly', said Agathon, 'but New York is where the Englishmen go who visit America. They stay in or near New York. For they do not like to

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get far from the sea which is the source of their strength. They love the deep waters'.

'Yes', I said.

'And the strong waters, too, Socrates', added Agathon, 'and that is another reason why they like New York and are reluctant to go far inland. For they dread having to keep up long lines of communication'.

'Well', I said, 'they would be very safe in Kentucky'.

'And what happens when the Englishmen visit America?' demanded Lysis.

'Why', I answered, 'they are surprised it is not more like England, and at once complain; and many are offended that the Americans are not more like the English, and say so, for they are subjected to torture to make them say what they think'.

'What is the torture?' cried Phaelon.

'They call it the Third Degree, and it consists in endless interrogation'.

'Could you not get such a post as torturer in America, Socrates?' asked Lysis.

'There was talk of it', I said, smiling at him, 'but I cast the proposal from me as cruel. Anyway the Americans question their visitors day and night, saying: "What do you think of us?" till in the end the visitors confess'.

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'And then there is a war?' asked Phaelon.

'No', I said, 'they just stop the mouths of such visitors with pie'.

'Remember', I resumed, 'that to visit America is the most expensive thing an Englishman can do, and so it is only rich and leisured Englishmen who travel there. And these men do not admire commerce, for though their fathers or perhaps themselves have grown rich by it, yet it has always been rated at its proper value in England. It has always been the means to the leisured life. Furthermore the Englishman is not impressed by the very things that the American thinks will impress him. For the English do not admire size or reverence bigness. They were not used to admire the Spaniards or the French or the Germans in the past for being twice as many as they, and for having splendid courts and great armies and public works. Nor is there any sight in England more comical than to behold the rich and vulgar cosmopolitans, who have bought a share in their government, attempting to arouse an audience of Englishmen to enthusiasm for their own British Empire just because it is so very big. But the Americans will point to a crowd of offices or cars and feel happy in the knowledge that their country is shouting for itself.

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Now the English discover in the Americans most excellent hosts, for they are the most generous of all the barbarians, but the more grateful the English are, the more criticisms do they express, finding it intolerable that the hosts they like so much should go on pouring out admiration on useless things and prostrating the soul before number and quantity'.

'And what happens when the Americans come to England?' asked Phaelon.

'That happens a great deal more often. The English enjoy that. They feel very superior when they show to the Americans the cathedrals and castles of their country. They act as if they had built these things themselves, whereas, in fact, the dead who built them were as much the ancestors of the Americans as of the English. But the English are the elder branch that has inherited the place. The buildings the modern English themselves put up they do not point out with pride to anybody, and those that their fathers and grand-fathers built they cover over, when they can, with great cloths. But many Americans are forever wandering to these new buildings and are filled with joy that they build such places larger and better. For the pleasure of travelling in Europe is spoilt for them by the thought that their hosts do not know what a wonderful place America is, and they are forever

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bringing it into the conversation. Then they grow happy again, but their hosts less happy'.

'But it is the old things that they think they want to see', said Agathon.

'Yes', I said, 'they want to see Europe because they themselves came from it originally'.

'They do not go to Mesopotamia', said Agathon, 'though they believe they came originally from somewhere there'.

'It is curious', I said, 'but none of them boast of belonging to one of the first families of Mesopotamia. They want distinctions that are rarer than that. They get more pleasure from thinking their ancestors had seats in the Mayflower than from thinking they had seats in the Ark, though both voyages were what they call exclusive cruises'.

'And have they a special affection for the island of England?' asked Lysis.

'Why yes, most of the rich ones came originally from there', I said.

'Well, why do they not buy it?' he demanded.

'Many think that will happen in time', I replied, 'or at least that they will purchase all the surface to a depth of forty feet, for that is the earth upon which English history has happened, and that they will lay out the island in their western districts by Yellowstone

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Park, where there is plenty of room for it'.

'Is it true', asked Phaelon, 'that the English will be forced to sell, Socrates, and that they can only live at all by getting the Americans to come and look at their country?'

'I thought', said Agathon, 'the English had a great many factories like the Americans'.

'Why', I replied, 'what has happened to the English is one of the most ironical things in the world. For during many years they have sacrificed their old and pleasant life to attain mechanical efficiency, and they have made the northern half of their little island dreary with factories and blotted out its sky with smoke. They said: Here are our riches, and in the name of wealth we must desecrate the land. But do you, O Lysis and Phaelon, observe the justice of what is happening to them. Their factories have grown a burden to them, and a problem and source of quarrels and poverty. And their real wealth lies in what is still preserved of the old England'.

'Why, Socrates?'

'Because the Americans will pay to see it and will not pay to see the factories'.

'Is their position so desperate?'

'No', I said, 'if we are seeking the truth we must declare that it is not so

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desperate as the Americans imagine, for the Americans forget that the English are in partnership with the Scotch'.

'Who are the Scotch?' asked Phaelon.

'I should call them the guardian class in Britain', said Agathon.

'Yes', I said, 'they watch over the English and they have a great empire all over the world'.

'And the English are allowed to share in this Empire?'

'Yes', I said, 'by the terms of the partnership which was by far the most important event in the economic history of the English. For this Empire is very large and rich'.

'And did the Scotchmen win it by the sword?' was Phaelon's next question.

'Indeed no', I replied. 'In fact Englishmen and Irishmen—you have heard of them?'

(Both Lysis and Phaelon nodded vigorously and Lysis said 'Of course', in such a tone that I felt ashamed of the foolish query.)

'Englishmen and Irishmen', I went on, 'were rather more prominent in those first stages. But it was the Scotchmen who made the Empire pay'.

'And after all', said Agathon, 'that was the real point in having an Empire'.

'And they built up a great trade with everybody and prospered greatly', I

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said, 'the Scotch and the northern English particularly. And these two together, when they go abroad to gain money, call themselves the British. But they make the mistake of thinking their activities will go on being profitable for ever. They think that because all the world, even Greece, has bought from them in the century past, the relationship will continue. But I believe otherwise, and that this foreign trade will be their destruction, and that they are selling the swords which will pierce their own bodies'.

'How, Socrates?'

'Why', I said, 'whoever deals with them finds that they have nothing to give of the amenities of living. They do not sell you marbles, or statues, or wine, but coal and machinery. And if you buy these things you find they start industry in your own country also. For of all newcomers to a country machinery is the most tenacious of its own character and the most certain to make its new home resemble its old one. An Italian will make Italy again in New York, and a machine will make Sheffield in the furthest Indies'.

'And is that really all the British offer the world?' exclaimed Lysis. 'They will not last long according to my opinion'.

'No', I said, 'for it will be realized that these iron machines of theirs are a

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more deadly threat to the life of a city than was the Wooden Horse himself'.

'By Hercules, yes!' they agreed.

'If the British had desired wholly to destroy and change Troy they would not have come with besieging armies. They would have sent some machinery and divided the rich against the poor by holding out promises of all the machines would do to make life pleasanter for the rich. And in fewer years than ten, the walls of Troy would have disappeared. The city would have vanished as though it had gone up in vengeful smoke. Indeed it would continue smoking not for a few days, in the manner of Greek destruction, but indefinitely, with chimneys to insult and dwarf the lofty towers of Ilium, if this industrial system of theirs did not make chimneys of the very towers themselves'.

'The British, as it seems to me, are most dangerous', said Lysis.

'But', said Agathon, 'they also offer the world other things beside machinery and the coal to feed it with. Wool'.

'The sheep's clothing of the fable', I said, 'and a snare and one in which you soon discover the wolf, as many a simple barbarian race has found. Buy from them one commodity only and you find that they use the money you pay them in a very alarming way. They use it to develop your country'.

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‘How?’ asked Phaelon.

‘Why’, I said, ‘they make you spend the money you owe them in putting yourself in a position to supply others with some commodity or other, so that you can buy more and more from the British. In this manner they have changed the face of half the world. Those who buy little from them they term “backward peoples”’.

‘I am sorry for the barbarian world’, said Lysis, ‘with these two great barbarian races, the British and the American, invading the rest in this cunning way and weaving snares about them’.

‘Lysis’, I said, ‘while you feel so full of pity, pity also the British. For I said that what they do they can only do for a certain time’.

‘How?’

‘Why’, I explained, ‘their prosperity depends upon being able to persuade other peoples to buy these goods of theirs’.

‘Yes’.

‘But those who agree eagerly and buy machines and make railways become, in proportion as they are eager and active, independent of the British and manufacture everything for themselves, as happens in their own colonies, while the others, not sharing these ideals, neglect the machines and remain poor and can neither pay for what they have had nor

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buy anything fresh. Against this second class, who are found largely in the other or southern Americas, the British merchants have a strong prejudice'.

After pondering for a moment, Lysis said: 'It seems to me the Scotch must be very like the Americans'.

'Yes', I said, 'but when the Scotch first set out to grow rich and important they had themselves to please a guardian class that valued learning, and so they learnt to value it too. Whereas there was no class that the Americans had to please. But, in general, there is much in common between the Americans and the commercial people of Scotland, and those also of the North of England, who agree with the Scotch about life. Of them we may say with the poet:—

"Nursed in so harsh a clime what shouldst thou know of good?"

'And these make the settlers the most acceptable to the Americans'.

'Why do they not all go there', said Phaelon; 'I do not like to think of them so near Greece'.

'The men of South England, on the other hand, find it very useful to have these Scots and northerners in the same island'.

'Why?'

'Well', I said, 'the southern English live a life that is almost reasonable, inquiring into things, and pondering

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upon them, and amusing themselves with games, and, whenever possible, sitting in the sun. Those men who are both rich and sensible settle in South England'.

'Is their pondering good pondering?' demanded Lysis.

'Why no', I said, 'for they like to begin and end in the middle of all questions. It is difficult to muddle through in philosophy'.

'How do they live, apart from what they get from the Americans?' asked Phaelon.

'Some make these northerners pay them rents but a large part are concerned one way or another, I am afraid, in the business of their great city of London'.

'What is that?'

'It is doing the business of other people for them, because it will be done better than they could do it themselves. Even the Athenians use the city of London'.

'What is the secret of this London business?' asked Phaelon.

'There is a special climate in London', I answered, 'which has the property of making every man feel that he is ruined. And no one is ever distracted from minding his affairs by beholding the sun or the sky, whose contemplation has ever led men to philosophy. So they do business there in a very careful and concentrated way'.

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‘ But you say ’, said Lysis, ‘ that they do not come like the Americans to consider commerce the end of life ? ’

‘ No ’, I said, ‘ for the Americans do their business where the climate makes them over-sanguine and they become filled up with the hope of gain and cheerfully sacrifice everything else to the excitement of the contest. But the Londoners regard their business hours as the scraping of a subsistence and skilful avoidance of starvation, and flee from the city every evening. And they live in homes surrounded by other influences than that of commerce, and by the marks of the partial civilization to which South England has attained. But when they are at business they do about as much mischief to the rest of the world as do the Americans ’.

‘ Ought we not to hope ’, said Lysis thoughtfully, ‘ that the football game will in fact make the Americans very warlike, and that they will attack the English and Scotch ? ’

‘ Why, Lysis ? ’

‘ That the great barbarian peoples may destroy each other and that the rest of the world may be freed from the aggression of their industrial life ’.

‘ Yes ’, I said, ‘ it might well be the best thing that could happen. But they are more likely to combine forces in order

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to industrialize the rest of the world. And though they are very different people yet bonds of similarity are growing up, for machinery sets its stamp upon souls, and the same machines will in the end produce the same souls. To take but one instance, among both peoples there has grown up the love of the Dark Cave'.

'What is the Dark Cave?' asked Lysis and Phaelon together.

'You tell me', I said, 'that you remember the ideal state that Glaucon and others worked out with me?'

'Yes', said Lysis, 'it has often been spoken of since'.

'Well', I said, 'I there pictured the unhappy lot of men sitting huddled together in a dark place, condemned all to look in the same direction and to watch phantoms and shadows of men as though they saw something real'. 'I remember'.

'And I pitied such men, condemned to the contemplation of unreality, and sought, you remember, how they might be rescued and brought out into the sunlight and might learn to see men as they were'.

'You thought', said Lysis, 'no lot could be more wretched for reasonable men'.

'Well', I said, 'the Americans and the English are not reasonable and will pay money to be imprisoned in these caves, and to contemplate lies and live altogether

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in a false world. This is making them one, for the greatest bond of union is to share a common experience'.

'Have you ever penetrated into a Dark Cave, Socrates?' asked Phaelon in excitement.

'It was the end of my American adventures', I answered. 'For I endeavoured to save men from entering these Caves, reasoning and expostulating with them, asking them why they would give their substance to be so misled about life'.

'And what happened, Socrates?'

'Alas, my friends', I answered, 'I was considered disgraced for attacking "our American Movies" '.

'And in the end, Socrates, I suppose you were deported?' demanded Lysis.

'What else, indeed', I answered.

'What, then, did they say to you?'

'That I had lied in filling in my answers to those first questions that all must answer who would receive a passport. For they said I had plainly intended to subvert the government of the United States, and that they found, after inquiry from various publications, that I had been in prison. And the inspector added that I had been in an asylum also, for that I came from Europe, and the Balkans at that, which he considered to be nothing less than a madhouse'.

BOOK VI

‘ And do you think ’, said Agathon, ‘ they will read your views about them ? ’

‘ I think so ’, I answered, ‘ for they find the topic of themselves of much interest. But I do not expect them to profit by what I say, for even Xantippe is handicapped in their regard by belonging to the past. For they do not admire the past at all, nor is the word “ ancient ” ever used as praise ’.

‘ Do they despise all history ? ’ asked Lysis.

‘ Yes ’, I said, ‘ and they love the utterance of their Detroit Oracle, when he said

History is bunk,

and they regard him with increasing honour as he says these things and as the Europeans have given to Aristotle the title they think honourable, calling him the Master of them that Know, though they do not add how little, so the Americans hail the Detroit Oracle as the Master of them that Guess ’.

‘ But ’, said Lysis, ‘ though they despise even the story of the Greeks, surely they are eager to know about Rome, for Rome excelled also in size and great buildings and bridges and in buying culture from the East. Do they not feel great sympathy ? ’

‘ No ’, I replied, ‘ and the priests and keepers of ancient tradition find the name

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of Rome an embarrassment to them, for the Americans will have no respect for Rome, since they heard it was not built in a day'.

'They have named a city after Plato', said Agathon.

'They will name a city after anybody', I answered, 'and there are but few of their own citizens whom they do not desire to forget'.

Here Agathon interrupted what I was going to explain about the cities, and said: 'But I believe they think of changing the names of their cities into numbers and of numbering the States. And some think it will help efficiency and be a compliment to themselves if they abolish the words United States and America and get everybody in all countries to call them One, as being country Number 1 of the whole world. But this compliment will cost many dollars'.

'If only philosophy cost many dollars', reflected Lysis, 'they would value it more'.

'They would', said Agathon, 'but as it is you must not despair, Socrates, for your countenance is one that grows upon people'.

'It grew upon me', I said.

'We', he said, 'have had to get used to you, and so it is perhaps with the Americans and philosophy. They will acquire the taste—in time'.

BOOK VI

'Anyway', said Lysis, 'they ought to be grateful to you, Socrates, for examining into what they think and do and value'.

'I think so', I replied, 'for I am pointing out to them something of great moment to their happiness when I declare that unless they reopen the question of the end of living they will grow dissatisfied and exist wretchedly. For they must not go on letting themselves be led by men with a low aim or no aim at all. For the conditions of the future will not support the philosophy of "making good" as did the conditions of the past. There is a point of view which suits a man or nation in the early struggle with poverty which becomes ridiculous when the struggle is past.'

'Many of them are beginning to think so', said Agathon.

'And I am beginning to think', said Lysis rising, 'that we have considered these Americans quite long enough, and that we should now move to some other place and refresh ourselves, and with new companions examine something else'.

'I am of your mind, Lysis', said Phaelon, and he also rose.

'I will accompany you', I said. 'Perhaps when the Americans hear what we say of them they will change themselves of their own accord and become what we would like them to be. And if

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this discussion of ours has that result it will be more useful, I think, than many of our talks. But whatever happens we have done our best for these Americans by telling them the truth. For there are times when it is important to know the truth, and life is one of them '.

THE END

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